This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

CHRISTIAN THOROUGHNESS

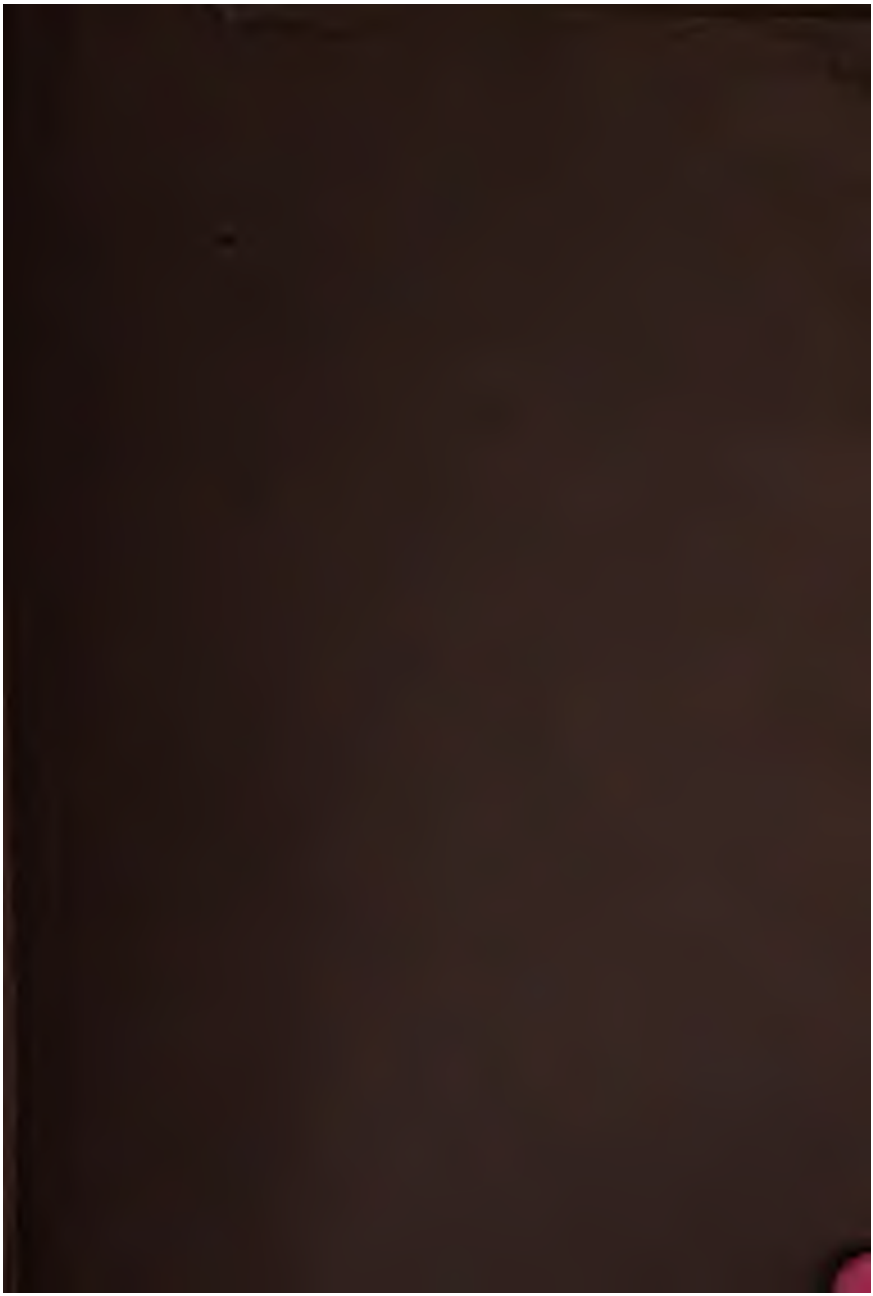
A MEMORIAL OF

THOS. AVERELL SHILLINGTON J.P.

BY THE

REV. JOHN DWYER

600024663R



CHRISTIAN THOROUGHNESS:

A MEMORIAL SKETCH

OF

THOMAS AVERELL SHILLINGTON, J.P.,

OF PORTADOWN.

BY THE

REV. JOHN DWYER,

AUTHOR OF "CHRISTIAN WORK FOR GENTLE HANDS," "DAILY HELP IN THE WAY OF HOLINESS," ETC.

London:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR, AT THE

WESLEYAN CONFERENCE OFFICE,

2, CASTLE STREET, CITY ROAD;

SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1875.

210. m. 464.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY BEVERIDGE AND CO.
(SUCCESSORS TO R. NEEDHAM),
HOLBORN PRINTING WORKS, FULLWOOD'S RENTS, W.C.

PREFACE.

IN a letter received from a brother minister, when the preparation of this Memoir was under consideration, the following observation occurs:—"You will have no apology to make for the production of such a life, and no blemishes to cover." This fact removes at the outset a serious obstacle which often lies in the way of biographers. It is a sorry case when the narrative of any one's life has to be commenced with an apology for its existence. In this instance no such necessity exists. As a Christian man Mr. Shillington was a model; and his character is sketched with the view of setting forth the grace of God as exhibited in him, and of encouraging others to aim at similar, if not equal, excellence. It is admitted that we are already provided with biography, even to superabundance; still this can scarcely be asserted in regard to Christian men of business. Their biographies are not so numerous as to leave no room for another.

The only matter which needs explanation is the

authorship of the following pages. This position is not self-assumed, and in attempting to discharge its duties the writer has felt his lack of fitness. It was undertaken at the request of Mr. Shillington's family; and, in the first instance, with the idea of merely preparing a sketch for one of the Methodist periodicals. The existence of a long and valued friendship must be accepted as the reason for the choice; and, when it was made, refusal did not seem to be a course that could be justified.

Grateful acknowledgments are tendered to those who have so willingly afforded their valuable aid. Amongst these may be specially mentioned his daughters, his son-in-law, Mr. Thomas Shillington, and his brothers, Messrs. Averell and John Shillington. Through their assistance it is hoped that some approach has been made to a fitting estimate of Mr. Shillington's character and career, while the volume has been enriched with sketches of his father and mother, incidents illustrative of the history of Methodism in the neighbourhood, and notices of several worthy persons, all of which are in keeping with the portrayal of the central figure.

The preparation of this work has been pleasant to the writer, and has been blessed to his own soul.

Each page has been written in prayerful dependence on Divine aid, and the book is now commended to the favour and guidance of Him whose faithful servant Mr. Shillington was, with the humble but confident hope that His blessing may accompany its perusal, and that many may by it be led to a fuller consecration to God and a quickened activity in His service.

J. D.

Belfast, June, 1875.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

I.

LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS 1

II.

HIS FATHER AND MOTHER 17

III.

BOYHOOD, CONVERSION, AND MARRIAGE 52

IV.

THE MAN OF BUSINESS 67

V.

LOCAL INFLUENCE 81

VI.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND CHURCH WORK . . 96

VII.

CHURCH WORK OF WIDER RANGE 119

VIII.

PAGE

TIMES OF REVIVAL 138

IX.

HOME LIFE 156

X.

BEREAVEMENT 180

XI.

SECLUSION AND DEATH 193

I.

LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS.

THIS volume would be seriously incomplete if it did not contain a notice of the native town of him whose life and character its pages are intended to pourtray ; and the history of Portadown cannot be sketched without distinctive reference to the commencement and growth of Methodism in the locality. This will be generally admitted, and will satisfactorily explain the denominational tinge which may colour the opening chapter, and probably, to some extent, the succeeding ones as well. This colouring is not the result of a sectarian spirit, nor is it imparted to promote sectarian ends ; but solely for the purpose of exhibiting a truthful representation of the subject in hand. Several worthy men connected with other Christian churches aided its progress by their intelligent and energetic labour, but it was with the planting of Methodism in it that this town began to flourish, and with its progressive development it has increased in size and prosperity. In some respects Portadown is almost without a parallel amongst Irish towns. Its growth has been rapid, its population having increased tenfold during the last seventy years ; and its progress, especially in its earlier stages, was mainly promoted by men connected with the branch of the Church of Christ already named—men

who stamped upon the neighbourhood the impress of their own manly Christian character, and won from others, as well as their co-religionists, respect and confidence. While, amidst the vicissitudes by which the history of Ireland has been marked, many towns have dwindled to comparative insignificance, Portadown has arisen to a position of importance, and bids fair to advance to a yet higher elevation in time to come.

The county of Armagh is, for the most part, pleasing in its aspect and fertile in its soil. The surface of the country is agreeably diversified, yet not hilly. The river Bann largely contributes both to its wealth and its beauty. From some height you see it winding sinuously through the meadows until it falls into Lough Neagh, a few miles distant, and helps to replenish the waters of that inland sea; while the mountains of adjoining counties furnish, whichever way you look, a noble background to the view. In a northerly direction, and near enough to be distinctly seen, rise the hills of the county Derry; and, in nearly the opposite direction, the Mourne mountains in Down are plainly visible. In autumn the prospect is peculiarly attractive. Rich fields of wheat invite the labours of the reaper, while a scarcely smaller area covered with flax, bearing its delicate blue flower, tells of the staple industry of the country; and studded pretty thickly around are neat homesteads, most of them with orchards adjoining laden with tempting fruit. Altogether, the eye rests upon a scene as complete and as lovely as need be desired—the spreading fields and orchards stretching away like

a rich carpet, the flowing river like a line of silver, the glancing waters of the lake reflecting the brightness of the summer's sun, with the chains of hills in the distance shutting out the view of the country beyond, lest it should die out into indefiniteness ; and this capable of endless variation as contemplated from different points, or seen at different periods of the day.

The inhabitants as a class are remarkable for their industry and intelligence, and will not suffer in comparison with any of the rural districts in England or Scotland. They are for the most part Protestants, and are devotedly attached to the reformed faith in its purest and simplest form. It cannot be denied that even now there are not a few amongst them with whom religion is but a name ; but, possessing as they do many excellent and sterling qualities, when they are brought under the influence of real godliness the result is very gratifying. The farms are usually small, the people relying for their support chiefly upon the weaving of linen and cambric, which is carried on extensively in their own dwellings. The houses are consequently numerous, the appearance of the country in many places being that of a number of scattered villages ; and, as you pass through it, you are impressed with the conviction that on all hands there exists a considerable amount of vigour and activity.

Portadown is situated in that part of the county which possesses the largest share of natural advantages ; and yet for a long time, when Armagh, Lurgan, and Tandragee were considerable and prosperous towns, it was a place almost unknown. And religiously it was

equally obscure. The parish church is at Drumcree, more than a mile distant; and, liberally as the town is now supplied with ecclesiastical edifices, it could not boast the possession of a place for public worship until the time when the first Methodist chapel was erected. It was evidently this fact which led to the entry made by Mr. Wesley in his Journal, on the occasion of his first visit, on Friday, 10th April, 1767, "At one I preached at Portadown, a place not troubled with any kind of religion."* The interpretation of these words which would regard them as representing it to be a town remarkable for its irreligion is scarcely compatible with the statement which follows, "The people gathered from all sides, and, when I prayed, kneeled down upon the stones, rich and poor, all round me." And the concluding part of the notice accords with an entry of four years later, "Friday, 28th June, 1771, I preached in the street at Portadown, to a serious, well-behaved congregation."† In order to do justice to the work of God in this town it is not necessary to blacken its character previous to the entrance of Methodism. Certain it is, however, that with the introduction of Methodism its prosperity commenced, and that with the growth of Methodism its importance has increased.

To watch the commencement and spread of religious influence in any locality is very interesting. Usually it begins in some central place, and extends to districts around; but in this case the order was reversed. Portadown did not soon yield to the means employed to plant in it that system which was being

* Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 263. † *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 414.

so much owned of God in other parts of the land. Societies were established in various country places on different sides of it, and from these the Gospel leaven worked its way into the town itself. The order in which the work prevailed may be briefly indicated.

Although there is reason to believe that some seeds of Methodism were scattered throughout the province of Ulster as early as 1748, we have no official reference to it until the year 1752. There were at that date six Circuits (or "Rounds," as they were then called) in Ireland, one of which was designated "The North;" and traditionary evidence goes to show that it had then obtained considerable footing. The Minutes of the first Irish Conference, which was held that year in Limerick, contain the following appointments for this extensive Circuit: John Fenwick, till Christmas; John Edwards, till Lady Day; Robert Swindells, apparently aided by Thomas Walsh, till Midsummer; and Joseph Cownley and Thomas Kead, till Michaelmas. They also direct that the Quarterly Meetings should be held at Lisburn. James Kershaw, who laboured in these parts in the year 1753, and who was a man of considerable ability, seems to have been very successful, and to have formed Classes in several districts of the country. It does not now appear to be possible to fix the exact order in which the different neighbourhoods adjacent to Portadown received the message of salvation, but the following is a statement which is at all events approximately correct.

Terryhugan, a country district near Tandragee,

Mr. Wesley designates, "the mother-church of all these parts!" * It was the second place he visited in Ulster, Newry having been the first. The date was Wednesday, 21st July, 1756; and in his Journal he remarks, "We were at a lone house; but the people found their way thither in the evening from all quarters. I preached in a meadow near the house, the congregation sitting on the grass. And surely they had ears to hear. God give them hearts to understand!" † That this prayer was abundantly answered we have pleasing and abundant proof. On six other occasions, Mr. Wesley visited Terryhugan, making seven in all. His next entry respecting it, gives a remarkable view of the style in which this honoured servant of Christ was sometimes entertained, while it indicates that many loving hearts and willing hands were there, even at that early period. "Tuesday, 9th May, 1758. We rode by the side of the canal, through a pleasant vale, to Terryhugan. The room built on purpose for us here is three yards long, two and a quarter broad, and six foot high. The walls, floor, and ceiling are mud; and we had a clean chaff bed. At seven I preached in a neighbouring ground, having a rock behind me, and a large congregation sitting on the grass before me. Thence we retired to our hut, and found it true,—

"*Licet sub paupere tecto*
Reges et regum vitâ præcurrere amicos." ‡

* Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 263. † *Ibid.* vol. ii., p. 361.

‡ Ibid. vol. ii., p. 421. The Latin quotation is thus translated by the Editor:—"Under a lowly roof a poor man may have more real enjoyment of life than even monarchs and their friends."

He then goes on to say, "I suppose all the inhabitants of the village, with many others, were present at five in the morning;" and mentions the case of a poor woman who carried her child, which was only ten days old, a distance of seven English miles, to have it baptised by him. He refers to his apartment at Terryhugan again on the 28th of April, 1760, "I spent a comfortable night in the Prophet's chamber, nine feet long, seven broad, and six high. The ceiling, floor, and walls, were all of the same marble, vulgarly called clay."* Five years later he speaks of the society there as "that plain, simplehearted people;"† and in 1769, he tells us that, the wind being cold, they erected a tent, to screen him from the north wind.‡ On the whole, we have gratifying evidence that Terryhugan gave very early and very diligent heed to the message delivered, and that the Society there, though apparently poor, was numerous, simple-hearted, and willing.

Probably Clonmain comes next in order. It is regarded as the Mother Church of the Societies on the western side of the Bann. Methodism appears to have been introduced to this place by Mr. Thomas Ryan, who had formerly practised as an attorney, but at this time lived on his own estate. He seems to have obtained spiritual good when visiting England on business, and immediately on his return to have begun to labour for the salvation of others. It is pretty clear that he was a man who possessed considerable gifts, combined with a larger amount of culture than was at that time usual. A friend still

* Wesley's Works, vol. ii., p. 508.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 199. ‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 339.

living had frequent conversations with a person who had reached his ninetieth year, and who distinctly remembered having heard Mr. Ryan preach at a place called Raw Castle,* in the year 1756, from 1 Corinthians, iii. 11.† Mr. Wesley visited Clonmain on the 27th April, 1762, and mentions "the new preaching house" as being "the largest in the North of Ireland."‡ This visit was succeeded by six others. On one of these occasions (14th April, 1767) he refers to the growth of the work of God, and speaks of there being there "one or two and twenty societies within the compass of ten miles."§ On the same spot a Methodist chapel still stands, in which services are regularly held, and a flourishing Sunday-School is conducted.

From Clonmain the good seed was carried to Grange,‖ where a Class was formed in 1764. A person

* A corruption of Roe's or O'Roe's Castle. It was once the seat of a famous Irish chieftain.

† Mr. Ryan's career in connection with Methodism was a very remarkable one. He seems to have laboured as a local preacher until 1767, when his name appears in the stations as Superintendent of the Armagh Circuit. The following year it disappears from the Minutes, and does not occur again until 1775, when he was appointed to London, the following year to Sussex, and in 1777 to Lynn. A second interval then occurs, and in 1790 his name stands for Downpatrick. He is never noted as having desisted from travelling, so that it would seem that he placed himself at Mr. Wesley's disposal to meet special emergencies. The case of John McNeese, from the same neighbourhood, is a similar one. He was stationed in 1769 in the Armagh Circuit, and in 1770 in Enniskillen. After that his name does not appear further. He was a man of humble gifts, but of great usefulness.

‡ Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 86. § *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 264.

‖ Grange appears to have soon become a flourishing society,

living in Grange, named Morrow, being related to another named Finn, residing about a mile from Portadown at Kilmararty, a door was opened for Methodism into the last-named place, and a mud-wall preaching house was erected there in the year 1767. The same year it was visited by Mr. Wesley. Under date 9th April he writes—"About noon I preached near Dawson's Grove to a large and serious congregation, but to a far larger in the evening, at Kilmararty. I do not wonder the Gospel runs so swiftly in these parts. The people in general have the finest natural tempers which I ever knew; they have the softness and courtesy of the Irish, with the seriousness of the Scots, and the openness of the English." * During his stay he was entertained at the house of Mr. George Joyce.

and to have been composed of persons in comfortable circumstances. The Steward's book of the Newry, or North-East, Circuit is still preserved, and it contains the following list of payments for June, 1765:—

	£	s.	d.
Clonmain		11	4
Terryhugan		7	0
Grange	1	3	1½
Cockhill		10	10
Newry		18	0
Rathfriland		6	6
Richhill		14	1
Lisburn		16	3
Newtownards		9	2
Comber		5	5
Belfast		—	—
Carrickfergus		—	—
	£6	1	8½

* Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 263.

Meantime the work of God was taking root in other places around.

Terryhugan lies south of Portadown, and Clonmain, Grange, and Kilmararty in a westerly direction. Northwards, at Derryanville, and eastwards, at Bluestone, Societies were springing up. The wife of Mr. Robert Johnston, of Derryanville, went to see some relatives in the county of Meath who had become Methodists. She was much impressed with the change that she witnessed, and became concerned for her own salvation and that of her family and friends. She invited a Mr. Doolittle, a local preacher, to visit her; and he came a journey of not less than seventy miles to declare in that neighbourhood "the unsearchable riches of Christ." His sojourn at Derryanville was brief, but it was much owned of God; and to this day "Mother Ailse" (Alice having been Mrs. Johnston's Christian name) is spoken of with respect and gratitude as having been the first to bring a Methodist preacher to the neighbourhood. It became a favourite place with Mr. Wesley. He speaks of it as "a little village out of all road, surrounded by bogs, just like my old parish of Wroote, in Lincolnshire:"* and in another place, after speaking of the Society as "the liveliest of all" that he had visited in his journey, he observes—"Thus has God His secret ones, in a little corner of the land, surrounded by bogs, and out of all road."† He found there, on another occasion, "some of the liveliest Christians in the kingdom," including in it eight who "testified that they had never lost the witness, nor felt any decay, since the hour they were

* Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 340. † *Ibid.*, vol., iii., p. 414.

perfected in love;"* and afterwards speaks of it as "a small village, surrounded by a bog, but inhabited by lively Christians."† Tradition states that a circumstance occurred at Derryanville strikingly illustrative of Mr. Wesley's regard for the young, and of his concern for their salvation. It appears that when he was on one occasion holding a lovefeast there, a leader who was handing round the bread refused to give it to a little boy, about five years of age, who had accompanied his mother to the meeting. Mr. Wesley, perceiving this, at once said—"Give it to the child; he may grow up to serve God in this place when I am dead and gone." And it is further stated that the boy did become a pious man, and that a Class met in his house for many years.

Bluestone is not mentioned in Mr. Wesley's Journal, yet at a very early date Methodism was planted there, and it has maintained a vigorous existence in that neighbourhood to the present day. Mr. Kershaw, whose name has already been mentioned, married the daughter of a farmer named Dynes, who resided at Bluestone, Mrs. Kershaw died soon after, leaving an infant daughter; and, when Mr. Kershaw received an appointment in England, the child was left in the care of her grandmother. Although good had been done, the Society was feeble, and ere long, probably through want of oversight, it became extinct. After some years, however, this girl began to inquire about the people with whom her father was connected, and heard of the small Society at Kilmararty, four miles distant. To this place she went, bringing with her

* Wesley's Works, vol. iii., p. 471. † *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 301.

some young female companions ; and before long she induced her grandmother to invite the preachers to her house. Thus, about the year 1770, Methodism was re-established in Bluestone. Some years afterwards it was greatly revived and strengthened by the devoted and successful labours of Mr. John Malcomson,* and subsequently by the zeal and influence of Mr. Joseph Malcomson, his kinsman. He was the founder of the Bluestone Sabbath-school, which was the first established in Ulster, and the second in Ireland.

Annagh, in the immediate vicinity of Portadown, is another place where Methodism occupied a position for a considerable time before it obtained an entrance to the town itself. The name of Paul, still worthily borne by some of its adherents, was intimately associated with its introduction. Mr. Moses Paul, who occupied an influential position in the neighbourhood, opened his house to entertain the preachers, and his heart to receive the message they delivered ; and thus Methodism acquired a firm hold. Previously occasional services had been held in the house of a

* He entered the itinerant ministry in the year 1787, and laboured with great faithfulness and success until 1798, when a severe illness brought on by preaching in the open air during heavy rain, compelled him to retire from the regular work. He returned to Bluestone, his native place, and for thirty years laboured to the utmost of his ability, preaching his last sermon about two days before his death. He had an imposing appearance, and a full, clear, and musical voice. His knowledge of the Scriptures was extensive, and his experience of the things of God deep. He had honour in his own country, being esteemed by all classes in the community. It was truly said of him by the subject of this memoir, " He never trips."

member named John M'Creery, and the preacher and his horse had been for some time entertained by the father of the late Mr. Hugh Mathews. Now a Society was formed, and from it not a few have gone to the paradise of God.

Nor has the list of adjacent places, which in this matter had precedence of Portadown, been exhausted.* Let it be accounted for as it may, this town was late in recognising the value of the revived and energised truth as proclaimed by Mr. Wesley and his fellow labourers ; but it has since that period made amends

* Amongst those claiming special remembrance is Lurgan, which Mr. Wesley first visited on 27th August, 1756, preaching in the market-house (Works, vol. ii., p. 363) ; and again on 16th May, 1758, when he walked to Lough Neagh, which he speaks of as "the most beautiful lake I ever saw" (Works, vol. ii., p. 422) ; as well as several times subsequently. On two occasions he refers to a Mr. Miller, who had constructed a figure that announced each hour "in a clear, loud, articulate voice," and whom he seems to have regarded as an extraordinary genius (Works, vol. iii., pp. 86, 471). When last there he records his opinion that it was "one of the pleasantest towns in Ireland" (Works, vol. iv., p. 301). Cockhill is also a place of much interest ; as is likewise Mount Roe, which was then a gentleman's seat, but is now a ruin. At the first-named of these places Mr. Wesley took fever by sleeping in the afternoon on the grass in Mr. Locke's orchard, which, by the way, appears to have arisen entirely from Mr. Wesley's want of care, and not from any fault of Mr. Locke (Works, vol. iv., p. 45). Charlemont, although some nine miles from Portadown, may also be mentioned, the fort at which, Mr. Wesley shrewdly observes, "probably costs the Government a thousand a year for not three farthings' service" (Works, vol. iii., p. 341). It became a very important centre of operations in the future stages of Methodism. These, with the city of Armagh itself and the town of Tandragee, which for many years was the Circuit town with which Portadown was connected, are the principal places in this part of the county where Methodism was planted at an early date.

for its tardiness, and not only outstripped the smaller places in its vicinity, but vied with the very foremost towns and cities in the land in the zeal and perseverance with which it has sought to cherish and extend this revival of primitive Christianity. An attempt must, however, be made to sketch its commencement and early struggles.

The first trace of a footing obtained by it in the town which we discover is connected with the removal into Portadown of a member of the Kilmararty Society named Samuel Lisk. This was probably about the year 1773. His door was at once opened to receive the messengers of mercy, but it does not appear that any Society was formed, and he maintained his connection with the class at Kilmararty. In his house Mr. John McNeese, Mr. Thomas Payne, who travelled the Armagh Circuit in the year named, and of whom it is stated in the obituary published in the Minutes of Conference that he was "a bold soldier of Jesus Christ,"* and other devoted men, declared the "truth as it is in Jesus"; and not a little opposition was stirred up, which does not seem, however, to have gone further than the infliction of petty annoyances. After some time Lisk removed to a distant part of the country, and a stable kindly lent by an innkeeper named Gardner was the only place which could be procured for religious services. In 1780 Charlemont was constituted the head of the Circuit, and the appointment for it in 1785 was John Crook,† John Miller, and James

* 1783.

† The venerable John Hill, who has but recently been called

McDonald. These faithful men preached in their turn in Portadown every second Sabbath on their way from Kilmararty to Lurgan, and after some time they were invited to the house of James Lemon,* a chandler, where, in the spring of 1786 a small class was formed, composed of persons in very humble circumstances.† The first leader was John Hamilton, who had come from Newmills, near Gilford. About this time Mr. John Noble, of Armagh, and Mr. James Heather, of Dungannon—zealous local preachers—began to visit Portadown, and Mr. Noble preached at the house of Mr. Richard Atkinson, a baker, who was friendly to Methodism, although not a member of the Society. It is also stated that meetings were held in

to his reward, states, (*Irish Evangelist*, July, 1860) that, though born in England, Mr. Crook may be claimed as an Irish preacher. He was converted in Ireland, and laboured in it successfully for several years. In early life he was a soldier, having run away from a cruel master to whom he had been apprenticed. In the year 1770, when with his regiment in the city of Limerick, he was convinced of sin. Soon after, his friends procured his discharge, and he became a class-leader and local preacher in the town of Liverpool; and from it he was sent, in 1773, to the Isle of Man. In 1775 his name appears for the first time in the Minutes of Conference. In 1782 he came to Ireland, where he spent several years, travelling in the Lisburn, Charlemont, Tandragee, Newry, and Coleraine Circuits. He was for several years the Secretary of the Irish Conference, and he presided over its deliberations in the years 1791 and 1793. He died on the 27th December, 1805.

* Lemon's little thatched house stood on part of the ground now occupied by Alma-terrace.

† The feebleness of the Society in Portadown may be judged from its contributions for Circuit purposes. The first payment for quarterage was in September, 1786, and amounted to five shillings and eightpence; and this sum was not exceeded for several years.

a place which was resorted to for public amusement known by the name of "the cock pit."

Up to this period no regular lodging place had been provided in Portadown, owing to the low state of the Society in worldly things, but in 1790 Mr. Thomas Bunting became connected with it, and addressed to the servants of Christ Lydia's invitation, "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." * The Tandragee Circuit was formed in 1788, and included Portadown within its bounds from that date until 1836. The preachers appointed to it in 1790 were John Crook, John Cross, and Samuel Steele; † and the first Love Feast ever held in Portadown was conducted by Mr. Steele in 1791, in the house of Thomas Bunting. Not very long after this, the building of the first Methodist chapel in the town was commenced, and to the small Society of that day it was an undertaking of no ordinary magnitude. Its promoters appear to have had views far in advance of the Methodist people of the last century in many other towns, as the site selected was in a central and prominent position, very near to the spot where the Episcopal church now stands. But unexpected difficulties arose, by which not only was the project retarded, but the Society was much weakened, and several years elapsed before the building was completed.

* Acts xvi., 15.

† Samuel Steele had just been called into the work from the lower part of the county Tyrone, and travelled the Circuit to which he was appointed, clothed in a homespun suit of frieze. It is well known that he afterwards became eminent and influential, taking high rank amongst his brethren.

II.

HIS FATHER AND MOTHER.

HAVING given a brief description of Portadown and its vicinity, and sketched rapidly the introduction of Methodism into the adjacent neighbourhoods and then into the town itself, we are now called to concentrate our attention upon one family, and, in the first instance, to place on record a few facts respecting Mr. Shillington's parents. And they were parents worthy of such a son. They won "a good name" in their day; and he preserved it, and handed it down unsullied to his children.

Surprise has been expressed by many that no account of Mr. Shillington's father has ever been published; and this omission is the more remarkable, as there is happily available fuller information respecting him than is usually the case at such a distance of time. It would, therefore, be unpardonable if his name were now passed over with a merely cursory notice. He was a man of mark; he has left an account, in his own handwriting, of the dealings of God with him at the outset of his Christian course, which is full of interest; and he afterwards filled a position of no small importance both in the community and in Methodism.

The Shillington family is of English descent. Two brothers came to Ireland about the year 1658, being

encouraged to do so by Lord Conway, and took up their abode at Aughagallon, in the county of Antrim. Their immediate object seems to have been to execute extensive works at Portmore for the celebrated Jeremy Taylor, who was appointed to the bishopric of Down and Connor. Of the intervening members of the family little is known until we come to the father of the subject of this memoir. The narrative of his early life, and of his conversion, in given in his own words.

"I was born in the parish of Aughagallon, county Antrim, on the 26th of February, 1767. Being 'by nature a child of wrath,' I early felt the workings of a mind prone to evil and averse from good. When about eight years old, I remember my mother speaking something of the unpardonable sin, which so alarmed, me that I thought I had committed it, and should therefore be lost for ever. Under such apprehensions I was left to cry to God, who breathed some good desires into my heart; but, being enticed by evil company, I soon relapsed into my former state.

"When about twelve years old my father placed me under the care of a relative in Lisburn, in order to my receiving further education and being instructed in mercantile business. Here I had none to care for my soul, so that I was left to myself whether I would serve God or not. But 'the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men' once more inclined me to seek His face. I remember frequently, under the softening influences of Divine grace, when about the age of thirteen, my cheeks would be bathed with tears and my heart filled with such joy and love as I could

not express. These feelings, however, were but for a season, as I again turned to my former course, and persisted in sinning against light and knowledge.

"Having completed my sixteenth year, my father brought me home. As he was a man who endeavoured to preserve his children from gross immorality, I was restrained from many of those sins to which I had been addicted while distant from him; but, though kept back in a considerable degree from outward wickedness, my heart became corrupted more and more, and my guilt and condemnation increasing, I thought God would never be reconciled to me, but that I should be banished from His presence for ever. O how often did I wish I had my life to live over again. Being ignorant of 'the righteousness of faith,' I thought man was to be the purchaser of heaven by the merit of his good deeds. Thus unacquainted with the simple terms of the Gospel—'repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ'—I longed for happiness, but found none. I saw in a degree the sinfulness of sin, but still remained a captive to it. Having none to instruct me how to come out of myself and fly to God's grace for help, I formed many resolutions, which all proved ineffectual because formed in my own strength. My evil passions and desires I thought I never should be able to overcome. Having many anxious thoughts about my future state, I remember often, when going along the way with a rod or staff in my hand, I would set it up, concluding if it would fall to this side I should go to happiness, if to the other I would be consigned to eternal misery. In many like instances I sought to know what my

doom would be, but could find no satisfaction of mind, however favourable these signs might appear. I now saw the hand of God in all this, as thereby eternity was continually held forth to my view.

"When about the age of eighteen I remember our parish minister Mr. Fletcher reproved my father one day because he and his family did not attend the sacrament. At the same time he pointed out to him that the sin of abstaining from it was nearly equal to that of receiving it unworthily. The words had a good effect on my father. When he came home he spoke to all the members of the family who were come to years to judge of the importance of such a step. As they were readily swayed by his advice, they all, myself excepted, agreed upon the first opportunity to accompany him to the solemn ordinance. But to me it was a matter of great concern to know what I should do. I was unwilling to disobey my father; yet, as I was convinced that I was unfit for anything of the kind, I utterly denied him, and told him that I would wait until another opportunity and prepare myself for it.

"The Christmas festival falling out a few days after, I attended service at the Church. While on my way thither I began to commune with my heart, and felt such drawings of the Spirit as I had not experienced for a length of time. It was then suggested to me that, if I would only deny myself of my evil ways, the Lord would have mercy upon me and blot out all my sins. To give up my sins I felt reluctant; but, knowing that I must either submit or perish, I resolved upon denying myself of everything that would shut

me out of the enjoyment of heaven. With such feelings I overtook a friend who had formerly been a Methodist.* I was without prejudice against any person for choosing a different mode of worship; and, as I believed any one was as good as myself, from his orderly conduct I thought I would be quite safe in letting him know my mind. I told him I was willing to forsake sin and comply with my father's advice in regard of receiving the sacrament. I also told him it was strongly impressed on my mind to receive it, believing it would be well with me. He encouraged me, and said the Lord would yet bless me. So we walked together till we arrived at Church.

"As I was now fully determined to save my soul I received the sacrament, which to me was a solemn ordinance. When receiving it I found a measure of joy and comfort, and, being glad that I had renewed my covenant with God, I resolved to devote the remainder of my days to His service. I now applied myself to the reading of His Word. Formerly I would take every opportunity of shunning the place where it was read. But O, what a change! Often with streaming eyes did I read it for myself. Glory be to God for such a deliverance to the vilest of the vile!

"Having persevered in seeking the Lord, it was not long till I was enabled to believe that He had pardoned all my sins and accepted of me as the purchase of blood divine. I now began to speak to several of

* This was John Kelly, who in the latter part of his life resided in Portadown. He finished his course, happy in God, on the 5th of May, 1839, aged 79 years.

those who had been communicants, but I seemed to speak a strange language to them, as to all appearance they understood no more of the work of grace upon the heart than a child newly born. When I told them of the deceitfulness of my heart, and what a vile sinner I had been, their general reply was that they could not believe I had a bad heart, as I was always a well-behaved boy and wished my neighbours no ill. Such replies gave me to see that their conversation could be of little service to me.

"Being resolved upon abiding by the Word of God, I continued searching the Scriptures diligently for instruction. It was not long until I became an object of jesting remarks in the country; but I had learned that 'all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.' I now endeavoured to find if the Lord had a people who adorned His Gospel, and, in a little time, formed an intimacy with some of the Moravian brethren who lived near my father's. Their conversation I found very profitable. I also read a volume of sermons which was written by John Cennick.* The author of these sermons I believe was

* Mr. Cennick was born in the town of Reading, in Berkshire. He entered upon his religious career in 1738, and in 1739 assisted Mr. Wesley in Kingswood, and in various parts of Wiltshire. Owing to some difference between them as to doctrinal views, he became separated from Methodism in 1741, and associated with the Moravians, amongst whom he became a successful preacher. His zeal having led him to Ireland, where Methodism was only known by report, he was reported as one of its adherents, and was subjected to much reproach and persecution. Once when preaching, he referred to the "babe wrapped in swaddling clothes," and a Romish priest who heard him declared that the

assisted in writing them by the Spirit of God, and they were made a great blessing to me for the confirmation of my views and feelings. I likewise formed an acquaintance with some people called Methodists, and to them I freely disclosed the dealings of God with my soul. Their company I prized highly, and could say whenever I met with one of them, 'Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.' Gladly at this time would I have joined in their social meetings, but my father opposed me in it, and told me we might love the Church well enough '*without riding upon the rigging of it.*' Nor was this all, for shortly I was given to understood I would have to leave him if I took up with such people.*

man was "a swaddler." Thus originated this well-known term of reproach. Mr. Cennick early directed his course to the North of Ireland, where his labours were owned in the salvation of many. Amongst the societies which he formed in Ulster two may be mentioned—Ballinderry and Gracehill, both in the county of Antrim. Henry Shillington, grandfather of the above, joined the former, and died in communion with it. He was born in 1711, and died in 1785. His daughter Sally was also a devoted member of the same community, and was admitted to the settlement at Gracehill as a single sister, and was interred there. The last-named establishment was founded by Mr. Cennick in 1746. On about 200 plantation acres thirty-nine family residences are erected, with a chapel and two principal houses for unmarried brethren and sisters. The name of its founder is cherished in this place with feelings of no ordinary interest. Many of his published sermons had been preached here; and, being largely distributed in the neighbourhood, produced deep impressions on serious-minded readers.

* Methodism had been introduced into this part of the country by a young man named John Martin. He was a linen weaver,

"But how have I to acknowledge that the Lord is still gracious to deliver such as trust in Him. My father, having taken a farm in county Armagh, made me an offer of it, which I accepted. In the month of May, 1789, I entered upon this new situation, accompanied by one of my sisters, who acted as housekeeper for me. I now could adore the goodness of God in this affair, as there was a flourishing society of Methodists, consisting of about sixty members, within reach of me, in a place called Derryanville. I was thus left at liberty to attend the means of grace amongst the Methodists. Their doctrine I heartily embraced, and truly the Lord blessed the preaching of the Word to my comfort and edification.

"By this time the report went to my father's family that I had joined the Methodists. At the first opportunity he questioned me concerning the truth of it. I told him I was not joined, but only went to hear them. He said he thought the evil was not great, provided I did not make a practice of it. Shortly after several of his acquaintances cried out against him for allowing me to follow these people. He then set up in arms against me, and used every means he could think of to stop me; but the Lord enabled me, by looking to Him, to stand against every oppo-

and so gained upon the family in whose house he boarded, that he was permitted to gather a few of the neighbours there for exhortation and prayer. The meetings continued to increase, and a gracious influence rested upon those who assembled. Ultimately, a class was formed; and Mr. John Smith, who was then stationed in the Derry Circuit, supplied the place with preaching at stated times. Amongst the first fruits of his labours was Mr. Thomas Kinley, who died happy in God in 1789.

sition. I now united myself to the Society with a hearty determination to take up my cross and follow Jesus.

"My father's prejudice being roused by my joining the Society, he ceased holding intercourse with me, as he said he expected I would return to him like the prodigal son. He also became urgent that my sister should return home, as he heard that she too was likely to turn Methodist. I was therefore induced to think of entering the marriage state; but, in looking out for one to go hand in hand with me to heaven, I met with many difficulties. At length I was introduced to one such; and, having obtained her parents' consent, we agreed to join ourselves together, and her father engaged to come to my place, that the necessary arrangements might be made in order to our being married. Here, however, I was in a great strait. My father, not being on terms of intimacy with me, I feared from the dislike he bore to the Methodists that he would not give his consent to my marriage with one. At any rate, I thought I would perform the duty of a child by letting him know the step I had taken. I made it a matter of prayer that God would constrain my father to do His will in this affair. Accordingly, I went to him, and conversed with him, and found my prayers directly answered. Before this he was opposed to me in every possible way, but now he said he would assist me in anything he could do. Thereupon a friendly settlement was made, and on April 10th, 1791, we were joined in marriage. Truly I may bless Him who has the hearts of all men in His hands that He has given me my desire in a wife who loves Him,

and whose chief endeavour is 'to adorn the Gospel of God her Saviour!'

"I invited the preachers to preach at my house once a month. The Lord prospered His work, and I encouraged such as were desirous of fleeing from 'the wrath to come' to meet me each Sunday morning at ten o'clock. We had not met often till the Lord so blessed the means that two were thereby brought to the knowledge of the truth. Glory be to His everlasting name! I spoke to the preachers to meet there as a class, and twelve were received as members of Society. One of them, a servant maid of my own, is indeed a miracle of grace. Being bred up a Roman Catholic, she was prejudiced against all who were not of her own persuasion; but, while Mr. Bell the preacher* was praying with us one morning, the Lord touched her heart in a remarkable manner. According to her light she had been sincere; and, while agonising with God upon that occasion, she felt the fire of divine love kindled in her soul, accompanied by a joy that was inexpressible. But soon the enemy began to persuade her that it was a bewitchery cast upon her by the preacher. For some time after she was unwilling to join in family prayer. She also kept secret the workings of her mind, until one evening I was reasoning with her and explaining the manner of the Spirit's operation on the soul, when she told me

* The Rev. James Bell, who entered the ministry in 1790—one of a noble band, which included Samuel Steele, Thomas Brown, William Ferguson, Charles Graham, and William Smith, as well as others—and, having laboured with great success, chiefly as an Irish missionary, died in 1844, at the patriarchal age of 85 years.

she believed what I said, and also acknowledged what she had felt herself. I then endeavoured to persuade her that the work was of God. As her mind was now in darkness through unbelief, she set herself again to seek the Lord, with full determination not to rest until she had found Him. After this she joined our class, and soon obtained 'peace and joy through believing.' Her friends, having heard what had taken place, thought she was going mad, and were for tying her with cords; but the Lord delivered her, and enabled her to rejoice in His salvation."*

Here ends the narrative. No doubt if it had been continued a very interesting and complete autobiography would have been the result. But, although nothing further is extant from Mr. Shillington's own pen, with the exception of a few journal-like statements of personal experience, a number of well-authenticated particulars have been gleaned with characteristic and affectionate diligence by his youngest son, which enable us to follow up the sketch just given, and to present a pretty full view of an honoured and useful life.

* The name of this person was Mary McKeown. She died May 1st, 1832, having continued in the service of the family upwards of forty years. None but a parent could exceed her in fondness for the children, all of whom she tenderly nursed. Nor was she forgotten when old age and decrepitude rendered her unfit for any of the duties she had been accustomed to perform, her wants being all supplied in the most considerate and affectionate way. Mr. Shillington required every member of his household to be present at family worship; and, to make conformity to this rule the more convenient, he conducted it in the large kitchen of the farmhouse. Mary could not avoid it; but it is said that it was her practice at first to stop her ears lest she should hear the words of Scripture or of prayer.

Possessed of a vigorous and inquiring mind, it was a happy circumstance that soon after Mr. Shillington's conversion several volumes of Wesley's and Fletcher's works were put into his hands, which he read with careful attention. Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament* he particularly prized, and obtained from them many important illustrations of divine truth. He was accustomed to meet with other young men for conversation on religious topics, from which he reaped considerable advantage. He was also led to institute careful inquiry into the leading principles of the Christian system. This was the result in part of urgent necessity. Atheistical suggestions by which he was assailed again and again were to him a source of indescribable affliction. He fled for help to "the throne of grace;" and though, by repeated onsets, the enemy sought to accomplish his overthrow, his "faith failed not," and by a triumphant sense of God's power "working in him mightily," he was upheld. A work written by the pious Fenelon, entitled, *A Demonstration of the Existence, Wisdom, and Omnipotence of God*, was made a signal blessing to him; and the reading of it proved a source of grateful recollection in after life. It is not unlikely that this ordeal furnishes the reason of the peculiar delight which he subsequently took in hearing or reading any able statement of the essential principles of Christianity.

Meantime he was careful to cherish the life of God in his own heart, and very actively to seek the good of others. A few extracts from his diary, which only deals with the early period of his Christian course, are given.

"O how wonderful are the works of the Lord! Hitherto He has been my help. The present day, which is Sunday, 8th April, 1792, has been a day of refreshing to me. I found it good to attend the Sacrament, and also when engaged in holding a prayer meeting."

"Wednesday, 18th.—For some days my mind has been centred in God, and this evening I was abundantly blessed in a prayer meeting."

"Sunday, 22nd.—This was a morning of love to my soul. At ten o'clock preaching, one of our sisters was crying out for mercy; and, while some of our friends were praying with her, I was filled with such a holy burst of heavenly joy as I could not express. My bodily frame was so affected for some time, that I was put from either singing, praying, or praising."

Sunday, 29th.—I was happy this morning in Class-meeting, and the people were much refreshed. While assisting to hold a prayer meeting in a new place, I was very happy; and, though some of the people seemed like adamant, yet others were somewhat affected, so that I was enabled to wrestle with God in faith for them."

"Tuesday, May 1st.—At a Love Feast, held in Portadown, the Lord blessed my soul, and gave me a longing desire to be fully renewed."

"Wednesday, 27th.—Blessed be God, my soul was greatly refreshed this evening in a Love Feast. The number of people assembled was so great that we had to go to an orchard, and not only drops, but showers, of redeeming grace descended into many hearts. I was so filled with the humbling love of

Jesus, that it was beyond the power of my tongue to express what I felt."

"Sunday, July 19th.—When I got up this morning my bodily vigour was much prostrated, and I found deadness and inactivity in my soul. In some degree the Lord blessed me in meeting the Class at Derryanville, and after that in meeting the Class in my own house; but soon I felt myself cold again. My wife and I then entered into conversation about our spiritual condition, and I told her of my 'leanness.' We went to prayer together, when the Lord met us both, and gave us to drink out of salvation's wells. This gives me to see the value of a partner who is going with me to heaven."

Here may be appropriately introduced some interesting references to this model Christian home, which we find in the published life of the Rev. Adam Averell, a minister of the Established Church, who was a relative of Mrs. Shillington, and who, during an unusually protracted life, was closely connected with Methodism. At this time he was convinced of its excellency, and had a secret respect for it, though he did not consider it necessary.* Having independent means, he had a strong desire to preach the Gospel without remuneration, and had just resigned his curacy because his gratuitous services would not be accepted.† He chiefly exercised his ministry amongst a little flock that assembled at his own house on Sabbath evenings, but he also frequently preached in other places.‡

* Memoirs of the Rev. Adam Averell, p. 25.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 41—43. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

Under date June 17th, 1792, he writes—"Being on a visit with my relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Shillington, near Portadown, I preached in the parish church of Drumcree to a very large congregation. All were serious and attentive, and many of them evidently felt the power and enjoyed the comforts of true religion. While here, I was present, *for the first time*, at a Methodist Class-meeting, and was greatly strengthened and comforted by the simple, heartfelt, religious experience of the people. I was at once convinced it was a blessed means of grace, eminently calculated to quicken, encourage, strengthen, and confirm those who are subjects of a Divine work in their hearts; and resolved to introduce it amongst my own people at home." *

Carrying out his determination, Mr. Averell formed a Class at his own house on the 1st of July following, when eighteen gave in their names; and in the course of a month it was "divided into three larger ones;" † so greatly did the Lord bless the "church in the house" at Drumcree, and make it, even thus early, the means of sending the seed of saving truth to a distance of many miles.

It will be seen that Mr. Shillington gave himself very zealously to Christian work in meeting classes and conducting services for exhortation and prayer; but, although he had from the time of his conversion an impression that he should preach the Gospel, and although many of his friends urged him to do so, he felt reluctant to undertake the formal and stated exposition of the Word. Circumstances, however,

* Memoirs of the Rev. Adam Averell, p. 57. † *Ibid.*, p. 59.

opened his way to a sphere of usefulness in which he was afterwards much owned of God. In the summer of 1793 he spent some time at Warrenpoint, and at this watering-place met Thomas Pennington, from Tandragee. Both being alive to God, they could not long endure "the lingering torment of leisure," and united in holding meetings which were made a blessing to many. This friend frequently importuned him to preach, and at last he yielded, taking for his first text Mark xvi. 15, 16. With fear and trembling he made the attempt; and thought, as he was then a considerable distance from home, that it would remain unknown. In this, however, he miscalculated, for news of the preacher and the sermon reached home before he did, and the result was that from that time he was regularly employed as a local preacher. In this department of labour he displayed a large amount of ability and remarkable zeal, riding long distances, and enduring no small amount of toil, in fulfilling the appointments assigned to him and seeking out new openings. His view of this work was interwoven with his most positive convictions and his best feelings; and in its performance he usually enjoyed liberty, and was cheered by success. A friend, speaking playfully of his readiness to engage in it, remarked that "he had only to turn round from purchasing a cart of grain in the market to preach a sermon." And yet preaching was to him no light business. He was accustomed to refer to it as "a painful study." He considered that all right preaching involved the faithful interpretation of the Word of God, and merely to loop a sermon upon a text he regarded as "handling the Word of God deceitfully."

He frequently approached his subject in a manner somewhat hesitating, and his style exhibited no effort to drape it in any artificial dress, or to gather around it any but the simple and natural views belonging to it. In details he was not minute; but he was strong in his grasp and comprehensive in his range of thought, and often penetrated deeply into the meaning of Scripture. His earnestness was frequently manifested in deep emotion and falling tears; and, at times, rising into full sympathy with his subject, he would kindle into considerable force of expression, producing extensive present effect, and making the truth to be long remembered and often referred to.

Meantime his business engagements prospered, and he acquired no small amount of influence in the neighbourhood. Having removed from Drumcree to Portadown, he found himself in a more central position in regard both to commercial and religious life. With a rather portly person, and a manner hearty and natural, he was a general favourite. Easy of access, and much esteemed for his practical wisdom, he was the ready friend and counsellor of those whom he could in any measure serve. Yet he did not seek positions of importance for himself, but was ever as ready to take the lowest office, or perform the humblest part, in any undertaking, as to assume the lead. This power of adapting himself to persons and circumstances led an acute observer of character to say concerning him—"That is the most wonderful man I ever knew. He is ready for every occurrence. Now you will see him in intimate association and intercourse with a man of the first rank in the country;

and, before half an hour has passed, he will be in the house of some poor person, with the sick or dying, either exhorting them, or on his knees commending their case to God in prayer." Himself an able and energetic man of business, his dealings with others were sometimes marked by a warmth of temper and an impetuosity of manner which were excessive ; but no one was more ready either to acknowlege any fault of which he might be guilty, or to forgive injuries inflicted upon himself. Many wondered that he remained in so small a place, Portadown being then a mere village; and, no doubt, if the acquirement of wealth had been his main object, he would have gone elsewhere. A leading merchant in a neighbouring seaport town remarked that "it was preposterous for a man of Mr. Shillington's capabilities and character to bury himself in such a place as Portadown." But it is pretty clear that in the course which he pursued he was Divinely guided. He there acquired an influence and accomplished a work, the effects of which are confessed by all ; and even those who made a jest of his religion paid homage to his sagacity and manly integrity.

When he came to reside in Portadown Methodism had little more than an existence in it. There was the fragment of a Class ; but the leader's inconsistencies were such that he failed to command respect, and ere long his connection with it was severed. Influential persons in the place treated religion with derision, so that we find Mr. Averell writing in the month of August, 1799—"I spent the next two days in proud, Gallio-like Portadown. Few places in the North have more withstood the truth than this town." At the

same time he expresses some hope for the future, adding—"But I think there will be a yielding to its influence. I felt, while preaching, that God was powerfully calling many, and I have a conviction that they will hear and obey the call." * An attempt, as mentioned in the previous chapter, had been made to erect a house of prayer, but the unfinished walls proclaimed the fewness and feebleness of those who desired the accomplishment of this object. Numerically, spiritually, and financially, the state of the Society was very low.

But Mr. Shillington was not a man to "despise the day of small things," or to shun a cause which he believed to be good because of its weakness; he immediately identified himself with it, and a life and energy hitherto unknown were at once infused. Chiefly at his own expense, the chapel was completed, and by the latter part of the year 1802 it was opened for public worship. It is an interesting fact that in this building was commenced, in 1803, the Sunday school which ranks second (that at Bluestone, as already mentioned, being first), of those established in this part of Ireland. It was commenced by Mrs. Robb, a native of England, who had become connected with this neighbourhood by marriage.

Soon Mr. Shillington began to take a prominent position in the more general interests of that branch of the Church with which he so thoroughly identified himself. His house was the preacher's home; and under his roof some of the most noted ministers of the day were entertained. More than once Dr. Coke

* Memoir of the Rev. A. Averell, p. 235.

was his guest, making his house a centre from which he went to towns and villages around, where he preached to unprecedentedly large congregations, and with wonderful power. Probably to Dr. Coke's visits is to be attributed the ardent feeling in behalf of Foreign Missions for which Portadown has been long distinguished, and by which it is still marked.

Another visitor of eminence was Dr. Adam Clarke. Regarding his hostess with peculiar favour as being from the same county (Derry) as himself, Dr. Clarke, contrary to his usage, joined when sojourning in Portadown a large company of preachers and friends who had been invited to tea; and, while he did not so far depart from his practice as to partake of the beverage, he entertained and instructed all present by enlarging, in his own lucid way, on the leading doctrines of Methodism, their connection with experimental and practical religion, and the tendency of its whole economy to promote personal holiness and happiness, and to diffuse the same to every part of the world. On one of the panes in the window of his bedroom he wrote with a diamond ths following lines:—

"Peace be on this house bestow'd,
Peace on all that here reside!
Let the unknown peace of God
With the man of peace abide.
Let the Spirit now come down;
Let the blessing now take place!
Son of Peace, receive thy crown,
Fulness of the Gospel grace."

This memento is still preserved, and is highly valued. He also inscribed on the glass in another apartment few words in Latin, to encourage Mr. Shillington's

eldest son, who had just commenced to learn that language.

Dr. Clarke was accompanied in this visit by Mr. Butterworth and his son, who were entertained by Mr. Boyce, of Moyallon, a magistrate and a local preacher. At that time much excitement prevailed in consequence of the introduction of Lord Sidmouth's Bill, which was intended to crush dissent and Methodism. Mr. Shillington's convictions in favour of religious liberty were very decided, and he watched this movement with prayerful interest, giving to it his most strenuous opposition. He had made arrangements, if the Bill had passed, to leave his business in the hands of others, that he might go forth to proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God, identifying himself with those who might be called to suffer persecution, perhaps even to the extent of fine or imprisonment, for the sake of Christ. The attempt had been happily defeated just before the visit of Dr. Clarke and Mr. Butterworth ; and, the former having in the evening preached in the open air to an immense assembly from Jude 20, 21, the latter gave a narrative next morning in the chapel, showing how the Sanballats of that day were disconcerted, and their deep-laid schemes rendered abortive.

The defeat of this measure led to the holding of a meeting of the Local Preachers, Stewards, and Leaders of the Newry District, in Portadown, as a central place, to deliberate on some matters which were considered important for the right administration and consolidation of Methodism. As the result, a memorial was presented to the Conference of 1812, offering several

practical suggestions, most of which were subsequently adopted.

But troublous times were at hand. It is not intended here to go into the history of what in Ireland is known as "The Division," yet that unhappy event cannot be passed over in silence. It is well known that from the time of Mr. Wesley's death a demand sprang up in the Methodist societies for the administration amongst themselves of the ordinances, great inconveniences having arisen, and sometimes severe rebukes having been received, through the practice of seeking them elsewhere. The Conference, however, was very reluctant to take so decided a step. Hence, in the Minutes of 1792, it was stated that any change would "have a tendency to do immense mischief to the souls committed to our care," and the resolution was adopted not to make any alteration "till a change of circumstances renders a change in that plan so unavoidable as to justify us in the sight of God and man for making it;" and in 1803 the preachers were forbidden to "perform the office of Baptism on any account." There is also a recommendation in the Minutes of 1806 "to all our people to be constant in attending the Church and Sacrament." These extracts show at once the pressure which the Conference was feeling year by year from those who wished for the ordinances, and its unwillingness to yield to these repeated and urgent solicitations. It never seems to have doubted, however, its right to dispense them, if such a course were judged to be expedient. In 1814 "petitions from several Circuits" were presented, asking for the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and "after long delibera-

tion" the request was granted: but subsequently the operation of the vote was stayed for one year. In 1815 the subject was again considered, and a letter was addressed to the petitioners, regretfully and tenderly refusing their prayer, and informing them that Mr. Averell was requested "to visit them as often as possible, to minister to them the precious memorials of redeeming love." As may be supposed, this did not satisfy the applicants; during the year the demand continued, and in several instances the Lord's Supper was administered, in opposition to the somewhat inconsistent and perplexing regulations and advices of the Conference. For these irregularities eight of the leading ministers were censured by the next Conference, three of them very severely; but it was virtually admitted that they were punished for doing a right thing, as, under certain stringent regulations, the desire of the petitioners was at length conceded. The Tandragee Circuit, which then included Portadown, was one of the first of the Circuits in which the administration of the Lord's Supper was permitted.

Mr. Shillington's views as to the propriety of this course were decided from the beginning, and in his adherence to them he never for a moment wavered. This is the more remarkable and praiseworthy, as Mr. Averell, his relative and personal friend, was so prominent an actor upon the other side. He formed his judgment independently, and nobly stood by the principles which he believed to be right and true. To his influence and wisdom at this period Methodism in Ireland is much indebted. He believed it to be a system raised up of God for the spread of His truth

in this land and throughout the world, and he was willing to bear or to do anything to promote its advancement. With this conviction he risked the alienation of friends, that he might perform what he believed to be his duty. In pursuance of this aim, "the Dungannon Committee" was formed, and to its wise and vigorous action Methodism in Ireland is much indebted, especially for the preservation of its connexional property. In the published Minutes of 1817 is recorded a vote of thanks from the Conference to this Committee; and in those of 1818 we find an address from the Committee to the Conference, signed "T. Shillington, President; A. Wilkinson, Secretary;" also the answer of the Conference thereto. Very complimentary reference to its services is likewise made in the Address of the Irish Conference to the British Conference of the following year. From that time forward Mr. Shillington took an active part in connexional affairs. He was the originator of the Building and Chapel Fund, from which so much benefit has arisen, and was a member of the first Sunday School Committee appointed by the Conference.

But withal he did not abate his earnest and well-directed efforts to promote by personal and self-denying labours the salvation of souls. The weather during the year 1817 was peculiarly unfavourable. For seven weeks of the early summer not a shower had fallen, while from the end of June to the close of the year it rained almost incessantly. All kinds of crops suffered seriously, the prices of food became unusually high, and in town and country fever set in with virulence. Mr. Shillington heeded not the

danger of infection, but went wherever duty called, to relieve want and to lead sinners to Christ. The chastening hand of God was not altogether in vain, and a blessed work of revival was experienced in many places. The following is an extract of a letter, which he sent to the Editor of the *Methodist Magazine*, shortly after:—

"My Dear Brother,

"As I know at all times you feel a lively interest in any communications relative to the prosperity of the work of God, I found it impressed on my mind to send you the information that God has, since last Conference, gloriously poured out His Spirit on this and several neighbouring Circuits. Within these two months past, we have had sixty added to our societies on this Circuit, and I suppose not less than the same number have found pardoning mercy. Our congregations are now fully doubled over all the Circuit, and a most pleasing prospect opens to our view in every direction. The Lurgan Circuit is in a most prosperous state. I think that not less than fifty at their Quarterly Meetings* obtained pardon. I was a witness at two of them of the great work our Redeemer is carrying on. In Cookstown Circuit, a few days ago, in conversation with one of the leaders, he said he never saw such Quarterly Meetings in their Circuit before. A friend from the Dungannon and Charlemont Circuit, who was here a few days ago, says that in his circuit they are daily adding to the Church, and two persons from the Ballymena Mission gave me

* This was the popular designation by which Love Feasts were then known.

a wonderful account of the work of God there. Belfast, Lisburn, and Coleraine are doing well; so that, upon the whole, the North of Ireland is in a most prosperous state.

"I remain, yours truly,

"THOMAS SHILLINGTON."

But these quickening influences were followed by a much more powerful visitation during the ensuing year, so that at the Conference of 1819 an increase was reported of 3,523 members, of which about two-thirds was in the province of Ulster; and in 1820 a further accession was secured of 1,227 members. "So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed." In this prosperity Portadown largely participated, and Mr. Shillington was ever amongst the foremost in promoting it. One memorable occasion has been often referred to as a time of great power. He had preached at Baltilumb, in the vicinity of the town, and a prayer meeting was held afterwards by devoted fellow-helpers; the result of their united efforts being that upwards of forty persons are believed to have there found peace with God.

Mr. Shillington's domestic life was peculiarly happy. He was blessed with a partner who was in all respects like-minded with himself, and whom he regarded, as the autobiographical sketch indicates, with sincere esteem and strong affection. She was the eldest daughter of Nicholas and Hannah Averell, of Ballinderry, in the county of Derry, and was born on the 27th March, 1762. Her father was cousin to Dr. Averell, sometime Dean, and afterwards Bishop, of Limerick. The religious state of the neighbourhood was not encouraging. The greater portion of the people were nominal Protestants, the services of the parish church

were in general well attended, and some observed strictly the abstinence required by the Rubric during the season of Lent; but of spiritual religion few had any idea. The amount of religious training received by Sarah Averell seems to have comprised little more than a form of prayer which she was taught to repeat morning and evening. As there was not a school near her father's abode, she was sent, when about eight years old, to the village of Coagh for the purposes of education. There she lodged with a respectable lady, both occupying the same bedroom. This person did not bow the knee in the presence of her young friend; and, while early training and conviction of duty prompted her to pray as usual, the fear of making herself singular was too much for her tender years, and during her sojourn there the duty was left unperformed. On her return home her mind was greatly distressed, and she knew not where to look for relief. One day she went into the fields, taking with her the Book of Common Prayer, and there, in the furrow of a corn field, she opened it at the confession in the morning service, "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep; we have done those things which we ought not to have done; we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and there is no health in us." With broken heart and streaming eyes she repeated these words, nor did she cease pleading until the sense of condemnation was removed, and her mind was filled with peace. From this period she attended regularly to the duty of private prayer, and was found each Sabbath in the house of God. When about sixteen she became very anxious to be alto-

gether a Christian ; but clear views of the plan of salvation were then rare, and she found none to help her. She was much concerned about coming to the Lord's table. After close self-examination she ventured to do so, and, while the minister handed to her the cup, repeating at the same time the words prescribed in the Church service, she was enabled to rest with all her heart upon the atonement of Christ as offered for her ; her soul was filled with love, and her lips with praise. Subsequently, however, a marked decline took place in her religious life. She became fond of dress ; music and dancing had strong attractions for her; and theatrical representations exercised over her a fascinating influence. Her father, anxious to gratify her, took her on horseback (according to the custom of the times) to Belfast, a distance of over thirty miles, to attend the theatre.

About this time one of the early preachers was one day travelling from Armagh to Coleraine. Crossing Ballinderry Bridge he entered the county of Derry, and, going up the hill to where the road is bounded by the churchyard wall, he disposed of his horse for the time, and commenced to sing. Soon a number of people from the village of Churchhill collected around him, and for the first time in this parish Christ was preached by a Methodist preacher. The service being concluded the preacher offered to preach to them on his next round, in six weeks after, if any person would provide a place for the purpose. This some one proposed to do. Mr. and Mrs. Averell had been standing in the outskirts of the congregation, and, as the people were dispersing, Mrs. Averell said

to her husband, "There is no person paying any attention to the stranger ; you had better ask him to come in and take some refreshment." This was accordingly done, and he was further invited on coming again to stop at their house; and from that time preaching was regularly established at Church-hill. Some time after a local preacher from Ballycastle visited the place, and his labours were greatly owned of God. He preached with power from Rev. iii. 20, and then announced for a meeting at which he would read the rules of the Methodist Society. Having explained the nature and design of Class-meeting, he invited those who "desired to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins," to give him their names. Several were then enrolled, and of these Mr. and Mrs. Averell's daughter Sarah was the first. The Class formed at that time is still in existence, and, in the intervening period many have gone from it to various parts of the Lord's vineyard, and not a few have been removed to the paradise of God.

This to Sarah Averell was a decisive step, and from it she never receded. Her profession of the saving grace of God in after years was unwavering, and her conduct was in accordance with her profession. In plainness of dress, in abstemious habits, in fearlessly yet judiciously reproving sin, in the diligent use of the means of grace, and in the joy she experienced when sinners were converted, abundant proof was supplied of the reality of the blessed change of which she was the happy subject. And in after years this was still more abundantly manifested in the management of her household. In exercising Christian

hospitality, especially to the messengers of the Gospel and the people of God, she was the means of doing much good ; while her efforts to train up her children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" were unremitting, and were rewarded with most cheering success. The preparatory work had been faithfully done, and, chiefly in connection with the remarkable visitations of Divine grace already referred to, all the younger members of the family were brought into the enjoyment of experimental religion.

The family discipline of Mr. and Mrs. Shillington appears to have been very gentle, but very wise. Innocent amusements were encouraged amongst their children, but games involving any appearance of impropriety and games of chance were strictly forbidden. Familiarity, and even playful intercourse, were regarded as quite consistent with respect for parental authority and exact compliance with the standing laws of the household, and thus a degree of freedom was enjoyed in this happy home which made it a place of joy. While still young, the children were brought into contact with the intelligent religious friends who were frequently found under their father's roof ; but, if at any time a subject of conversation was introduced which was unprofitable, or a style of remark indulged inconsistent with prudence or charity, the children would be sent on some errand, or engaged in some way by which their attention would be otherwise directed. As they grew up, as few restraints as possible were laid upon them. Early bias and habits thus formed in childhood made home a centre of powerful attraction to them in years following, with

which no other place could come into competition. And the understanding was cultivated as well as the heart. Useful reading was encouraged; and free discussion on various topics often took place, which was productive of much instruction and enjoyment.

Of the many who experienced the hospitality of this worthy couple, and witnessed their domestic life, but few now remain. One of these few is the venerable John Armstrong, of Lurgan, who is well known to be a shrewd and accurate observer of men and things. In a conversation with him, he expressed himself to the writer of these pages in terms something like the following:—He said that between fifty and sixty years ago there were connected with Methodism, in the county of Armagh, three men of great usefulness and distinction. One was John Noble, of the city of Armagh — a man devoted and useful, but chiefly remarkable for his great mental ability. Another was John Johnston, of Lurgan—a pious man and the means of the conversion of some, but specially known for his extraordinary liberality. The third was Thomas Shillington, of Portadown—a man both intelligent and generous, but particularly noted for his great activity in the service of God, and extensively useful in saving souls. If ever a man realised the standard of consecration and of service described in the twelfth chapter of Romans, he did. He was as busy on the Sabbath for the Lord as he was on the week-day in his ordinary engagements. He had great weight of character, and there was pith in all he said. His wife could not be excelled, she encouraged him in every good thing; she was sterling beyond compare. Mr.

Armstrong summed up by saying, "I never knew such a couple, minding first heaven, and then earth; first the soul, and then the body."

To this testimony may be appropriately added the following extract from the unpublished journal of the late Rev. William Reilly, one of the most eloquent and honoured ministers of the Irish Connexion, which has been kindly supplied by the Rev. Joseph W. M'Kay:—

"Mr. Thomas Shillington was a noble specimen of solid wisdom and piety, guided by sound principle and fidelity, and was unswerving in his attachment to that system of truth by means of which he had been made free and happy. He stamped his character not only on his own family, but on the town itself, and on the surrounding country, and bequeathed to his children an inheritance in his name and virtues richer than all the treasures of the East. It was my privilege to enjoy his friendship, which I valued very very highly; and, if I may judge of his talents as a preacher by his well-digested views of the Sacred Word, they were of no mean order, and they were employed for the good of souls and the honour of his Master. His training of his family was exemplary; and in this he was gently but effectually aided by the calm, quiet influence of his excellent and amiable wife, no mean witness, from early life, of the salvation of the Gospel. My first acquaintance with Mrs. Shillington was when I was a young Local Preacher. I met her at her sister's at Churchhill, and she then possessed genuine piety, which she uniformly and consistently maintained through a long life."

After a lengthened business career, Mr. Shillington

planned and built Tavanagh House, no doubt expecting to be permitted to spend several years in undivided service for the cause of Christ. But this was not to be. In the month of November, 1829, he preached, according to appointment, in Ballymagarney chapel, about six miles from Portadown. He spoke with enlargement and unction from John iv. 14. A class leader named William Castles accompanied him on his way home, walking nearly a mile beside his horse. After some time he asked Mr. Shillington if anything particular had happened to him lately, and related a strange dream that he lately had which aroused his fears. The same day, when about half a mile from home, Mr. Shillington's horse fell, and one his ankles was bruised. The injury did not appear to be serious, but by the fall an attack of gout was induced; and, although in a little time he was able to move about with feeble step, he was soon thrown back again by a fiercer attack of the malady. For several months the disease shifted from one part of his body to another, until, in the month of April, 1830, he was completely prostrated. Violent congestion of the lungs being superadded, it became difficult for him to speak to his friends; yet he repeatedly bore his testimony to the power of Christ to save. To his son-in-law, Mr. Paul, he said, while suffering acutely, "Oh, William, if I were like you I would be preaching to all around." Mr. Matthew Cooke, who for years had held an important position in his establishment, and who was a useful class leader, having come to see him, expressed his confidence that he now felt the sustaining power of Divine grace, to which he replied, apparently with

great effort, "Well, Matthew, I don't feel as much joy as I thought I would have. I feel myself a poor sinner, and have only the atonement of Christ to look to; and, trusting to that, I know I am safe." The next night he sank rapidly. The following morning, one of his children who was wetting his dying lips, said, "Father, you will soon be drinking the new wine of the heavenly kingdom," and he replied, "Yes, yes." Life lingered for two hours longer, when he fell under "the shuddering dew of death," and his redeemed spirit escaped home to God, April 15th, 1830. The District Meeting, which assembled in the month following, passed a resolution expressive of its high opinion of Mr. Shillington's faithfulness and usefulness in the various official positions which he filled, and of its sympathy with his bereaved family—a course which was never repeated until forty-four years later, when it was done in the case of his son, Thomas Averell. The trustees of the Portadown chapel also placed in that place of worship a marble tablet to his memory.

As indicative of the esteem in which he was held by the community at large, the following letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Blacker, a gentleman of distinction in the neighbourhood, is given. It is addressed to Mr. Shillington's eldest son:—

"CARRICK, *Saturday.*

"DEAR SIR,

"It is with no ordinary feeling of sorrow I learned, on my arrival here, the decease of your respected father. I have further to regret my having arrived too late to have joined in paying the last duties to his remains by attending them to the grave.

I am a sincere mourner on the melancholy occasion. But I mourn not for him; he is gone to his reward, and what is our loss is his gain. I mourn for the poor, of whom he was the benefactor; for the ignorant, of whom he was the instructor; for the benighted, whom he laboured to enlighten; for the community at large, of which he was a most useful member and an edifying example; and for the temple of the Lord Jesus, of which he was a firm and polished pillar. He was indeed a man at whose tomb the sincere Christian and the well-wisher of his country, for many a day to come, may pause and exclaim, 'Alas, my brother!' I cannot divest myself of the hope that his usefulness has not entirely ceased with his death. The very intense regret which pervades the country on the occasion cannot fail of exciting in some breasts, at least, a holy emulation to tread the path of good which he trod, in the hope of dying like him 'the death of the righteous,' and of being like him embalmed in the recollections of a mourning community. I beg you to accept of my sincere condolence, and remain yours, "W. BLACKER."

His devoted partner deeply bewailed her loss; but, consoling herself, said meekly, "It would be selfish to wish him back." She survived her husband several years, and passed away peacefully on the 13th of June, 1847, at the house of her son-in-law, Mr. A. McElwain, of Coleraine, on account of whose decease Irish Methodism has lately been called to mourn. He was an ardent friend to true religion, and a munificent contributor to local and connexional objects.

III.

BOYHOOD, CONVERSION AND MARRIAGE.

THE birth of Thomas Averell Shillington took place on the 16th of November, 1800, at Portadown, whither his parents had removed a short time previously. The *place* of his nativity has already been described. The *period* was marked by much political commotion, and was an eventful one. Rebellion had raged throughout a considerable portion of Ireland, and had just been crushed. The Act of Union had been passed, and its provisions were in course of being carried out; although respecting the policy of the Act much difference of opinion still prevailed. The province of Ulster had proved for the most part thoroughly loyal, as, amidst the successive changes which have since taken place, it still continues to be; but the then unsettled state of affairs had produced much uneasiness in the public mind, and a semi-martial spirit pervaded the population. While it has been conclusively shown that varieties in respect to country and climate produce corresponding effects upon character, it is still more evident that it is affected by passing events and the condition in which the tone of feeling in the community may happen to be. To this cause may be attributed in some degree Mr. Shillington's independence and sturdiness of mind. Robust in itself, it was moulded

and trained in a time well calculated to develop and strengthen its innate manliness.

His home associations were exceedingly favourable. His parents combined in no ordinary degree devoted piety with a remarkable amount of practical wisdom, and the influences prevailing in their household could scarcely fail to produce most beneficial effects upon his active and inquiring mind. Good principles were diligently inculcated, by example as well as by precept; the Sacred Scriptures were placed in their proper position before the young, being read daily in the family, and uniformly appealed to as supplying the law by which the course of every-day life is to be regulated; and religion was presented as being at once solemn and attractive, its ministers being treated with mingled respect and affection, and its services being attended with punctuality and constancy.

Thomas Averell was the fourth child, but the eldest son, of his parents, and his birth was the occasion of great joy. His sister Sarah died, after a short illness, at the age of thirteen. She combined sweetness of disposition and mental strength with remarkable physical development, and was a great favourite in the family circle. Another sister was married to the late Mr. William Paul, of Portadown, and many years since passed away to her reward. The third became the wife of Mr. McElwain, whose name has been already mentioned, and still survives. Two other sons were born subsequently, and they are yet spared to labour for God in their native town, the elder as an indefatigable class-leader and Sunday-school superintendent, and the younger chiefly as a local preacher,

in which important office he is extensively known and highly esteemed.

Being the eldest son, Thomas Averell seems to have claimed a large share of his father's affection, and to have been very much in his company. He was a boy remarkable for health and vigour, and was happily distinguished for freedom from that mischievous pleasure which delights in giving any one pain. It is related that, when about four years old, having been greatly annoyed by a lad somewhat older than himself, armed with a broom, the first weapon which came to hand, he attacked him, driving him into a corner. Here, with his enemy in his power, he held his weapon over the head of his antagonist, but did not let it fall. A companion looking on praised his prowess ; and, anxious that he should complete his victory, urged him to "show himself a man," by inflicting on the offender summary chastisement. He stood for a short time over his vanquished foe, but refused to strike, thus manifesting even in childhood a magnanimity for which he was distinguished in after life.

At a very early period he also indicated the course which he subsequently pursued with unflagging determination in regard to religion. An incident will illustrate this. When he was about six years old, the celebrated Lorenzo Dow visited Portadown, and was announced to preach in the Methodist chapel, then but recently erected, on a certain morning at five o'clock, which was at that time quite an orthodox hour for public service. Being so young, and the hour so early, and as a large attendance was expected,

it was arranged that Thomas should remain at home. This, however, did not suit his taste. Morning came; the congregation was so numerous that the people stood in the little sanctuary, closely packed together, and no one thought of the boy; but, just as the service was about commencing, he appeared at his father's side, having threaded his way through the mass of people who were assembled. All through his youthful years he manifested this attachment to the house of God, and ever seems to have associated with places of worship thoughts of pleasure, and not of gloom. When not more than eight years old he was known, when others failed, to raise the tune and lead the singing in religious meetings. And whatever he did even then he did all unconscious of self and surroundings; it was the spontaneous outflow of heart and energy which could not easily be pent up. Here again "the child was father of the man."

The facilities for education which a country town supplied were at that period but few, and the want of any means of rapid transition to and from more populous places rendered it inconvenient to send boys from home. Mr. and Mrs. Shillington made the most of such advantages as the neighbourhood afforded for the education of their children. It is pretty plain that these advantages were not very great, and that they must have been supplemented in no inconsiderable degree by home instruction, and subsequently by diligent self-culture. Thomas Averell's school life began when he was six years old. He was first sent to a dame school, the chief feature of which seems to have been that the favourite mode of punishment

adopted was to shut up delinquents in a strong chest which stood in one end of the schoolroom. It is presumed that some provision must have been made in it for ventilation, as there is not any account of even a single inquest having been held on the body of a smothered child. From that establishment he went in due course to one in which a male teacher presided, and this no doubt he felt to be a decided step in the way of promotion. His new preceptor gave his pupils a holiday every Monday, as he was on that day habitually incapacitated for teaching—an exercise which requires a clear, and not a muddled, brain, and when he did teach his range of instruction did not go beyond what are popularly known as "the three R's"—reading, writing, and arithmetic. But after a little a gentleman appeared who offered his services to meet the increasing demands for knowledge, and who professed to unfold the mysteries of mensuration and practical geometry. He was anxious to instruct the young ladies, as well as the youths of the sterner sex, in these branches, assuring their mothers that such knowledge would greatly assist them in the then notable accomplishment of making patchwork. Before long another step in advance was taken, an assistant being employed who was qualified to teach classics; and thus height after height in learning's steep ascent was appearing, though somewhat hazily, before the mind of our young friend.

None of these arrangements proving entirely satisfactory, and Thomas Averell being now ten years old, with two brothers a little younger, a few families in the neighbourhood, who were similarly circumstanced,

united to secure the services of an efficient teacher for their boys as a joint tutor. The person so engaged was a Mr. Campbell, of whom Mr. Averell Shillington, who was one of his pupils, and who has through life taken a deep interest in the subject of education, speaks in the highest terms, stating that he was not satisfied with a definition or exposition of any theory, unless it was also understood, and that he never knew a teacher so gifted with the faculty of teaching his pupils to think and reason. He required the lads under his care to work hard, greatly, it would seem, to their advantage. Concerning Thomas, the testimony of his surviving fellow-scholars is that he was very quick at learning, and that he particularly excelled in arithmetic. He also became a good Latin scholar, completely mastering the grammar of the language, and becoming able to read with ease the books usually put into the hands of boys; he likewise made some progress in Greek. It is likely that, if he had been allowed to pursue his studies with a view to an academical career, he would have distinguished himself as a scholar. As it was, the foundation was laid of a respectable education for the position he was afterwards to fill. Nor did he confine himself to the mere routine of school duties. He read eagerly such books as came his way, and it is stated that, before he had completed his twelfth year, he had become well acquainted with Dr. Coke's *Commentary on the Scriptures*; and, at a time when newspapers were not so abundant as they have become in our day, he kept himself acquainted with the progress of current events by commonly reading one on his way

to and from school. It may be remarked, before passing to other topics, that—as no doubt is often the case in regard to many things—the germ of his views respecting education was received at this time, and they were for the most part very similar to those which are now advocated by experienced educationists. He had, for example, a decided opinion that it would be a mutual advantage if boys and girls were educated together—not merely under the same roof, but in the same classes—as was the case in the schools which he first attended. He was also accustomed to maintain the importance of classical studies even as a preparation for commercial life, and years after wrote to his son, "I am glad you like Latin; I was fond of it when a boy." His views on the subject of female education were particularly advanced, being very similar to what are now promoted by those who would encourage the pursuit of studies calculated to exercise and strengthen the intellect, in preference to the acquisition of mere accomplishments.

In his thirteenth year Thomas Averell was removed from school for the purpose of assisting his father in business. The trade of the town at that time consisted chiefly in the purchase of grain from the surrounding farmers and its sale to millers and others, together with the importation of coals, timber, slates, iron, and such other commodities as were in general use. Frequent communication with Newry and Belfast was necessary, and, so great was the elder Mr. Shillington's confidence in his son, that, while we was yet a youth, he was accustomed to entrust to him the

transaction of important business in both those places, and to reach them required that a considerable journey be performed on horseback. Nor was his confidence misplaced. Prompt, energetic, and faithful in fulfilling his father's instructions, he gave early promise of the active, successful, and truly honourable career which followed. It is likely that, but for the influence of personal religion, his energies would not have been so completely under control, or his manner so genial. While the possession of experimental godliness did not make him less manly, it made him more gentle ; while it did not make him less industrious, it did make him less worldly than he otherwise would have been. A good illustration of his natural quickness, and of the severity of which he was capable, but in which he seldom indulged, is given by one who was an eye-witness of the circumstance. One day, as he was engaged in his father's counting-house, a person handed to him a communication which was very illegibly written. He handed it back, saying that he could not read it. A well-known character of that time, distinguished at once for his indolence and his self-sufficiency, happened to be standing by. "Give it to me," said he, "I never saw writing that I could not read." "Did you not?" said our young friend, looking steadfastly at him. He then turned round, and taking a paper from a file, handed it to him, asking at the same time, "Can you read that?" The other was confounded, and did not reply, and he added quietly, "I can tell you what it is ; it is your order for goods for which you never paid."

The subject of our sketch was converted on Thurs-

day, the 2nd of April, 1819. The statement is made thus particularly because of the importance of the fact recorded, and of the need which exists for the utmost definiteness in setting it forth. In a very large proportion of cases, while we may have indisputable evidence that a great spiritual change has taken place, we are left in ignorance respecting the circumstances under which it was experienced. The "passing from death unto life," is not distinctly outlined, and in some instances this tendency to mist and vagueness hangs over the soul in years following, generating many a growth of doubt and difficulty. While it would be most unwise to insist that in every case we must be able to state with exactness where and when we were converted to God, it is highly desirable, where such knowledge is possessed, that it should be preserved, together with any accompanying particulars that may in time to come assist us in baffling the adversary, and enable us to help others in their way to heaven.

The general revival of religion which occurred about this time has been noticed in the previous chapter. Amongst the large number of persons who were awakened and led to the knowledge of salvation, there were, as might be expected, several members of Mr. Shillington's family, including most of his children. In fact only one of them now remained a stranger to the converting grace of God, and that one was Thomas Averell. His sisters had been converted, and his brothers—both of whom were younger than himself; but he had not yet entered into the "liberty of the children of God." He was deeply serious, however,

and attended the means of grace diligently in the hope of obtaining deliverance. But for some time he sought the Lord sorrowing, and apparently in vain. Doubtless there was a cause for this delay, but at this distance of time it is impossible to search it out. Perhaps it never could have been fully discovered; and, in this and other similar cases, it may be that it was from the first intended that we should wait until the great revealing time to understand fully the reasons of the Lord's dealings.

The day mentioned was appointed for a love feast service in the town of Lurgan. At that period these meetings were held on a week-day; they were commenced in the forenoon, and from many miles round the people were accustomed to come for the purpose of attending them. Business was suspended, the entire day was given up to a kind of truly spiritual festival, and the results in the promotion of the work of God were often very glorious. Portadown being but four miles distant from Lurgan there was a considerable amount of intercourse between the Methodists of these towns, and at special times they mingled in each other's services. On this occasion, Mr. Shillington and his son journeyed together to the place of meeting, and on the way had some close and profitable conversation on the subject of personal religion. With sorrowing but resolute heart, Thomas Averell went to Lurgan that day, seeking the salvation of God; and he came home in the evening rejoicing in its possession. Never at any time a man of many words in dealing with matters of personal experience, it is not likely that he talked much about what God had done for

him; but he looked it and he lived it, and this he continued to do for upwards of fifty years. The consciousness of the favour of God which he that day received he never lost; others doubted, but he believed; others mourned an evidence obscured and an enjoyment fitful, but his course from that hour was steady and progressive. "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

We may be excused for lingering a little at this point, which is of so much concern in the history of every human life, especially as the case before us beautifully illustrates several important particulars. It reminds us that religion is more than morality, even of the most faultless kind. This the subject of our sketch already possessed. As a child, a boy, a youth verging on manhood, he was exemplary; yet he felt his need of an inward change to be effected by the power of the Spirit of God, and this change he realised. An old divine has said, "Heat water to the highest degree, and you cannot make it wine; it is water still. So let morality be raised to the highest, it is nature still." But when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart a new state of things comes into existence. It is the greatest gift that He can bestow upon us, for God Himself is love; and our love is the greatest thing that we can give to God, for it carries with it all that is ours. Mr. Shillington's conversion was genuine beyond a doubt; it was truly a heart work, going down to the very depths of his nature. And yet it did not impair those characteristics which gave to him so distinct an individuality. It strengthened and ennobled

qualities which had already won esteem from many and inspired hope of future eminence; it developed and directed energies which in an unrenewed state would either have lain dormant or been misapplied. One fruit of this change was a constant, solemn, and loving respect for the commandments of God. To him they were "not grievous," He regarded them as a hedge about him to keep him from harm, and throughout his Christian life he aimed at humbly and earnestly doing God's will.

A period of ten years may now be passed over—a period spent in the active engagements of commercial life, and the energetic discharge of the various official duties which were put upon him at an early period by the Church of God. Of these more again. This brings us to the time of Mr. Shillington's marriage, which took place on the 4th of August, 1829, a little more than eight months previous to his father's death. This is a critical stage in any man's history, and makes him either better or worse than he was before. It is designed to promote his well-being and usefulness, and it will doubtless do so in every case in which the conditions are fulfilled which the Scriptures declare to be binding on the followers of Christ. The brief but binding injunction, "Only in the Lord," may be regarded as a summary of the Divine will in regard to this matter. Various requirements of a prudential kind will commend themselves as being in accordance with practical wisdom; but the principle just named is essential, and any who disregard it incur serious peril, and usually endure heavy loss. In this important step Mr. Shillington was guided by a Providence

manifestly gracious and wise. The object of his choice was Miss Elizabeth Johnston, fifth child of Mr. John Johnston, of Lurgan, and a better selection could scarcely have been made. Her father, one of the notable three referred to in the previous chapter, was a large-souled and liberal man, buoyant in the company of the young, and one who delighted in the practice of hospitality. His piety was sincere and earnest, and his efforts to promote the salvation of souls were not without success. Her mother was distinguished for feminine virtues. She died in the year 1822, and, though somewhat invalided towards the close of life, still continued to be in her family a centre of social activity, mental culture, and true religious life. The home over which they jointly presided was, as may be supposed, one in which there was much social enjoyment, where goodness and geniality were happily combined.

Elizabeth was born on the last day of the year 1799, and of her childhood little is known except that she was often the willing bearer of her mother's charities and carefully prepared comforts to the afflicted and the poor. But in her sixteenth year she experienced the converting grace of God, and, with an elder sister, joined the Methodist Society, of which they both continued to be members during life. This happy change was brought about through the instrumentality of Miss Alice Cambridge, who at that time made a tour through a large portion of the North of Ireland, labouring publicly and privately for the good of souls, and who was entertained at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Johnston. Shortly after this she became acquainted

with Miss Lutton, whose counsels and influence were most beneficial in promoting her establishment in grace. When Miss Lutton was appointed to the office of class leader, Miss Johnston was enrolled as her first member. In ripe and venerable age, able nevertheless still to work for God, Miss Lutton lives in the city of Bristol, where she has resided for many years.

As to personal appearance, Miss Johnston was under middle height, and is described as having been rather inclined to stoutness; she had black eyes—soft yet animated—and smooth jet-black hair; her face habitually wore a cheerful smile, and her dress presented the appearance of entire neatness. Her active mind was quick to devise, and her nimble fingers were busy to execute, kindnesses for the benefit of others. She was a faithful worker in the Sunday-school, and a diligent reader of useful books, especially of the Scriptures. So extensive and accurate was her knowledge of the Word of God, that her father was accustomed to say that he "needed no concordance if Elizabeth were present." The habit of her mind was practical, and after her mother's death and the marriage of her elder sister, the supervision of a large household devolved upon her, giving full scope to her energies.

After her marriage she devoted herself assiduously to the claims and responsibilities of her new home, and in doing so her duty was her delight. She and her husband were "agreed," and therefore they found it easy and pleasant to "walk together," as they did for forty happy and prosperous years. It is not pos-

sible to decide the proportion in which each contributed to make that home the place it was. They both seemed necessary to it. The almost impetuous heartiness of the one, combined with a commanding influence which was felt by all but feared by none, and the mild firmness of the other, softened by a ladylike and considerate gentleness, gave the feeling that nothing was wanting to make up the ideal of a Christian home. And beginning thus auspiciously, their wedded life did not disappoint their own expectations or those of others. They were a blessing to each other, and to their immediate circle of friends. They were a blessing to the Church of God, and to the community around. They were especially a blessing to their children, who in almost every instance became the happy subjects of converting grace in early life, and are now actively and usefully employed in various forms of Christian service.

IV.

THE MAN OF BUSINESS.

IT will be perceived that Mr. Shillington's advantages at the outset of his career were neither few nor small. The son of pious parents, whose instructions and example were invaluable in training him for respectability and usefulness; the possessor of reasonable means, with a fair prospect of increasing them; converted to God at a comparatively early period, and living in the enjoyment of personal religion; and now having as a "helpmeet" one who was likeminded in all respects with himself, he had not to contend with the difficulties which many are obliged to face; and he had the advantage of favouring circumstances not unfrequently denied to others. But too many, quite as much favoured at the commencement of life as he was, have allowed their advantages to slip from them one by one, some resting on their oars until their substance becomes diminished or entirely lost, and others sacrificing their piety to their anxiety for worldly prosperity. In his course through life the well-known words of Scripture—"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," received beautiful and practical illustration. He did not waste by negligence, or squander by extravagance, the patrimony which he inherited; nor did he set himself to increase his possessions, "making haste to be rich," as though

the accumulation of money were the chief end of human existence.

Almost necessarily it follows that in sketching Mr. Shillington's history as a business man we have not to tell of anything that is marvellous. No mountain obstacles stood in his way; he entered upon no gigantic speculations; he made no bound from abject poverty to fabulous wealth. On his father's death he succeeded to a healthy and prosperous business, which he steadily pursued, developing and extending it as occasion offered until the period of his death. But it is on the very ground of this absence of the exciting and the wonderful that we consider his example to be particularly worthy of study. Men nowadays do not generally need to be stimulated in pressing after riches. Their appetite is sufficiently keen without whetting it. Feverish in their desires, they are not careful enough to secure safety as well as, and in preference to, success. They rise too fast; they climb too high. Possibly they attain the summit of their hopes; but their triumph costs too much if it brings with it injured health, and a care-burdened mind, and a dreary recollection of neglected or forfeited religious enjoyments. The important —but too often forgotten—truth, is commended to all concerned, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." A well-braced and vigorous body, a mind free from care, and a heart happy in the love of God, are "more to be desired than gold," or aught that gold can buy. It has been well said that "earthly things are precious when we use them as the materials with which we

may build up for ourselves a heavenly habitation ; but when our employment is followed only for its own sake, without a single thought or hope reaching beyond it, and the practice of it is sullied with all the unworthy principles and bad passions of the world, then what was before sound and wholesome becomes corrupt and injurious." So thought Mr. Shillington, and these views regulated his conduct. It is not contended that he undervalued money, or despised success ; but, with a capability of amassing wealth equal to most, he held this power in control, not being prepared to purchase at too dear a rate what he regarded as being secondary in value.

Two extracts from letters written to his children very clearly indicate his estimate of the relative importance of earthly good, even in its most valuable and least dangerous forms. One is addressed to his eldest son, and contains the following paragraph :—"Never forget that it depends upon yourself whether the object in sending you to Sheffield be gained or not. If it be secured, I shall not only not regard the expense, but be glad that I was led to incur it. The object is twofold—to put it into your power to become a respectable man of business, and that you might become a man of God—a Christian ; and it would be no compensation at all if you did become a respectable man of business, if you did not also become a Christian man." The second is equally clear and impressive :—"The *great end* of life is to obtain the favour and friendship of God, and to secure a part in 'the first resurrection.' To improve ourselves in secular studies and such acquirements as will fit us for passing

through life respectably, and with satisfaction to ourselves and those who are interested in us, is well; but the great business is to stand approved before God, and to hear Him say, 'Well done!' when we stand before Him to be judged."

A popular writer* has stated his belief that consummate men of business are very rare in the present day—almost as rare as great poets. Whether this judgment is correct or not as to their number, we are disposed to think that the subject of this sketch may be fairly regarded as entitled to this distinction; in proof of which a brief review, necessarily imperfect, of the leading qualities which in our judgment secured for him the pre-eminence he obtained may be given.

Religion became so completely interwoven with Mr. Shillington's being that it is not easy to think of him apart from its possession; yet the remark has been made by many that under any circumstances he must have been a man of note. His very appearance was striking. He was not much above the middle height, but had a well-built frame, sinewy and strong, surmounted by a noble head, with well-cut and expressive features. In his countenance you discovered a kind of manly beauty which made you like to look upon him. His manner was frank and hearty, and his words—not often very numerous, but always well-selected—indicated a mind of unusual vigour. To use the well chosen words of the Rev. Dr. Crook, "He had a fine natural understanding which took a comprehensive view of every subject, intuitively went to the root or fundamental principle in every question,

* Dr. Arnold.

detecting at a glance the most minute element involved." But, as already intimated, and as will speedily appear more fully, we cannot contemplate him apart from his religion. It permeated his entire character. Business and religion with him were linked together. He had no Sabbath dress as distinguished from that of the week day, but was always the man of God. His religion was practical, and his whole conduct was religious. Underlying his entire life were rules of action derived from the Word of God, and guiding his course of procedure in regard to all matters was the living principle of love to God.

Probably the casual observer and the intimate friend would unite in declaring activity to be one of Mr. Shillington's leading characteristics. Enjoying almost unbroken health, he was equal to an amount of labour which would have crushed an ordinary man ; and he seemed exactly to know his strength, so that he was never overtasked, though always fully employed. In addition to his private business, he became in the year 1842 Manager of the Portadown Branch of the Belfast Bank ; and, on his retirement from that position in 1851, he was appointed Local Director of the same establishment. He also held several agencies of properties in the neighbourhood, which involved a considerable amount of varied and important business.

It may therefore be concluded that his was no idle life. Yet he got through his engagements with ease. He acted on the view enunicated by a preacher of note: "It is not work that kills men: it is worry. Work is healthy ; you can hardly put more upon a

man than he can bear. Worry is rust upon the blade. It is not the revolution that destroys the machinery, but the friction." Of worry he knew nothing; with work he was thoroughly familiar; every hour was filled with it, and few days passed in which the amount of real work done was not something considerable. He was accustomed to rise early, to arrange his business carefully beforehand, and to complete each transaction in its allotted time, employing every moment usefully.

This being the case his punctuality could be relied on. Neglect in this respect he considered to be practical untruth and practical dishonesty, falsifying the word by which the engagement was made, and robbing others of their time, one of their most precious possessions. It is stated that he never was known to enter a place of worship after the service had begun, and the same precision distinguished his business proceedings.

Mr. Shillington was remarkable for a certain clearness of conception which was a valuable gift, and which was used by him with good effect. He appeared often, indeed usually, to see all the bearings of a subject at a glance, and he promptly made up his mind as to the course to be pursued. While others were examining and doubting, he would have reached his conclusions, and perhaps have commenced to put them into execution. As a plain-spoken but sensible man expressed it, "While others were fumbling about a knot, he opened it." Nor was his judgment often incorrect, although his opinions might be formed speedily; in fact, in later years, all classes came to rely upon his

judgment as the soundest of which they could avail themselves in all matters affecting their varied interests. They seemed to understand that the leading principles on which his views were based had been carefully weighed and deliberately adopted ; and that, when any question arose, they only required to be applied. In their application also he became expert in no ordinary degree.

His convictions were usually of the most decided description, and an opinion once formed he was not easily induced to change. But it was not the tenacity of dogmatism. He was always ready to reconsider a subject honestly and fully, though such reconsideration seldom resulted in any material alteration in his views. But, if, in any case, he was shown to be wrong, he would acknowledge his mistake with the utmost frankness, and without in the slightest degree lowering himself or lessening his influence.

He possessed no ordinary degree of wisdom, understanding that word in its proper and practical sense. He was quick, he was clever, he was able ; but more than anything he was wise. He was as far removed as can well be conceived from the sharp or cunning man, who is ready whenever he has an opportunity to outwit or take advantage of you; and yet he possessed a power of insight which enabled him to penetrate into a subject, and understand its bearings more readily than could be done by the adept in worldly artifice and craft.

Quick as was Mr. Shillington's apprehension, and decided as were his convictions, his determination and energy in carrying out his views were still more ex-

traordinary. He appeared to be charged with that consciousness of right which makes a man superior to the fear of reproach, opposition, or contempt, and which we call moral courage. He never dreaded consequences when clear in his convictions of duty, and he never acted unless he was thus clear. He might have appropriately adopted the sentiment, "I hate to see a thing done by halves; if it be right, do it boldly; if it be wrong, leave it undone." A friend of many years' standing exclaimed, in speaking of him after his decease: "He was the manliest Christian I ever knew;" and this Christian manliness pervaded his entire character, and brought strength and beauty into every relation of life that he was called to fill.

His habitual self-command was a thing much to be admired. His was no stolid nature, with blunted feelings and little sympathy with things around. His passions were strong and his emotions deep, but they were held in complete subjection. If in a nature so full of force as his, anger, or resentment, or grief, had not been thus restrained, the result would have been sad indeed; their unbridled indulgence would have been a terrible misfortune. But they were thoroughly regulated, and this gave to him an evenness of character not often found in combination with great susceptibility and impulsiveness. Hence hope, fear, sorrow, joy, anger, in his case were made to serve valuable ends. Instead of being hindrances to the accomplishment of the great business of life, directed by a strong will and a sound judgment, they were so many aids in transacting it.

And while he thus thoroughly governed himself,

he required prompt and entire obedience in others. In dealing with those who were slow and unsatisfactory his manner might now and again have the appearance of being stern and exacting; but he really had their good as much as his own interests in view in anything he said or did; and some of those who at first considered his requirements to be extreme remained in his employment for many years, and often expressed their gratitude for the sharp but kindly stimulants he had administered at the outset. Nor was it difficult to obey him. A tardy service, or a defective fulfilment of duty, it is true, he could not endure; but while his directions were given with an explicitness not to be misunderstood his expectations were reasonable, and his satisfaction with those who met his wishes was undisguised and most encouraging.

But nothing in Mr. Shillington's character as a man of business was more noteworthy than his unbending integrity. This was in him a feature of the most prominent description. Of all truly upright men it may be said that they never did a dishonest thing, of many that they never did a mean thing, but only of some—perhaps of but a few—that they never did a doubtful thing. In some minds the prospect of worldly gain, or the fear of being singular, produces a strange obliquity, and makes the line between right and wrong blurred and indistinct. But with our friend it was not so. When inducements to depart from an accepted and safe course arose, his suspicions seemed to be at once awakened, and caution curbed his customary eagerness. Regarded as a man, he was the soul of honour and of honesty; regarded as a Christian

man, he derived the inspiration by which his life was guided from the highest source, and was governed by the purest motives.

Two newspaper paragraphs, in noticing his death, fully bear out these statements, and are alike creditable to him to whom they refer and to the community which was able to appreciate such worth. One of them observes: "All his transactions were controlled by strict integrity and uprightness. His words were weighty and well chosen; and nothing in any way savouring of untruth was at any time allowed to proceed from his lips. His regard for truth was not founded upon maxims of mere worldly wisdom, but was the result of earnest, strong, religious teaching and conviction, and a sacred, almost solemn, sense of responsibility to his great Creator." And the other gives the following very decided and gratifying testimony: "No men, we think, contributed more to raise and fix the standard of mercantile morality on the foundation and teaching of Holy Writ, in this community, than did the Messrs. Shillington, father and son."

His views of commercial integrity may be not inaptly illustrated by the answers of a deaf and dumb boy to two questions proposed to him. Being asked, "What is truth?" he replied by drawing a straight line; being then asked, "What is falsehood?" he answered by drawing a crooked one. Mr. Shillington's business transactions were a series of straight lines. He knew nothing of the doubling and twisting processes which go so far to deprive mercantile life of its straightforwardness and dignity in these days of

rivalry and competition. An acute observer, who had known him intimately for many years, and who, being engaged in a somewhat similar line of business, might occasionally have had conflicting interests, declared his opinion of him in the following words which are given just as they were uttered lest their force should be marred: "I never met a man who had more conscience in his business."

Incidents were continually occurring illustrative of the correctness of this statement, and of the unbounded confidence which, as the result, was placed in him. It often happened that the farmer received from him a higher price for his grain than he had expected or laid upon it, the markets having suddenly risen; though not aware of the improvement that had taken place in the value of his produce, the advantage was freely given to him. In fact it became quite customary for the people of the surrounding country to depend more upon Mr. Shillington's knowledge than upon their own, and to send in their produce to his stores without making any bargain as to the amount which they were to receive in return.

It is not to be wondered at that a man so thoroughly upright and trustworthy should visit with the severest censure any deviations from the path of probity and rectitude in others which came to his knowledge. If ever he was in danger of being merciless it was in such cases. He scorned the meanness, he despised the hypocrisy, he hated the deception, of which the world is full. In fact, he had in him nothing that was small or low. His father-in-law was accustomed to say that "a man who is no honester than the law

would make him is a rogue," and Mr. Shillington fully adopted, as he often quoted, this opinion. In all his business engagements he had regard to a higher rule than any human code can furnish, and he sought to impress upon others the importance of having a similarly elevated standard as being the only one that would secure permanent happiness and enduring prosperity.

And not only was he superior to the temptations and allurements which exert so baneful an influence over weaker minds, but he also possessed a praiseworthy magnanimity which raised him above the petty rivalries and jealousies of business life. He was too large-souled to harbour these within his breast. Losses he occasionally suffered, like those around him, and sometimes these arose from the fraud, rather than the misfortunes, of others. Instances also occurred in which he was treated ungratefully by persons whom he had befriended. But in such cases he was never known to speak unfavourably of those who had erred, or subsequently by his actions to indicate that he remembered the injury. When many other men would have made the matter a subject of general conversation, persuading themselves that they were performing a duty by putting the public on their guard, he habitually maintained a dignified silence.

But while Mr. Shillington's principles of action were thus elevated and pure, there was nothing weakly in his prosecution of business and its claims. There are those who seem to be injured as business men by their religion, but this arises from an entire misapprehension of its nature and design. Others thoughtlessly

adopt the notion that effectiveness in business life is incompatible with a consistent religious profession, and therefore they do not seek to become religious; and it need scarcely be declared that their mistake is a very sad one. With him religion never impeded business. He did not see that the two things were inconsistent with each other, or that their claims need clash. His business energy was not diluted and enfeebled by his religious principle, but strengthened and directed by it. Like the pilot, who, with his eye upon the star, keeps his hand upon the helm, he most happily harmonised the two.

No doubt very largely as the result of this combination, there was about him a remarkable air of contentment, not a mere freedom from care, or an acceptance of that which is seen to be inevitable, but a real satisfaction in what was enjoyable, and a cheerful acquiescence in what was less to his mind. His desires, as has already been intimated, were moderate; and, on this very account, they were the more generally gratified. He did not grasp too much, and therefore he did not often fail to realise his expectations. And if, in any case, success did not crown his efforts, he submitted to disappointment in the belief that it was permitted for his good by unerring wisdom and sovereign love. Consequently his brow was not clouded with the worn and haggard look so common amongst the merchants of the present day, nor did he heave the heavy sighs which on all hands indicate the hollowness of much of the grandeur which surrounds us." Anxiety has been called "the poison of life," yet how many cherish it, and permit themselves to come in

creasingly under its influence: and all to such small purpose;

> "They heap up treasure mix'd with woe,
> And die, and leave it all behind."

Some may think it strange that a prosperous man of business should not be thoroughly contented, and yet it is to be feared that such instances are rare. The poor or the struggling often imagine that the rich have no room for restlessness of mind, but experience proves that contentment does not always accompany success. A competence being secured, many pant for wealth; this attained, with accompanying position and influence, they as eagerly seek for more wealth and higher honour; these secured, their insatiable desire is found to have been strengthened until it has become a very tyrant. Practically we admit that it is just as difficult for the rich man to be contented as the poor man. But it is possible and most desirable for both habitually to experience this soul-rest. "Be content with such things as ye have," is an injunction addressed to all, and with it is given a precious promise, enabling persons of every grade to obey the command, "For he hath said, I will never leave you or forsake you." The subject of this sketch, setting a noble example to men of his class, appeared constantly to enjoy everything which was capable of yielding satisfaction. His business, his money, his family, his extensive circle of friends, his religious associations and engagements, all yielded to him genuine pleasure, and any drawbacks to complete enjoyment, such as fret and chafe the minds of many, usually failed to cast upon him even a passing shadow.

V.

LOCAL INFLUENCE.

MANY persons entertain the opinion that it is easier to win local influence, and to retain it for a series of years, in a country town than in a large and populous city; but several reasons might be stated which would go to show that this is an incorrect conclusion. One thing is certain: there is in the former a better opportunity of estimating real worth than in the latter. Everything is known about a man in the smaller place, and his character must be such as will bear to be examined minutely,—and it may be at times tested somewhat severely,—or his influence will be short-lived, as well as confined within narrow limits. Wealth and talent may not possibly be valued so highly there as in the wider sphere, but moral worth is better known and is estimated accordingly. It is consequently no small tribute to the worth of an individual, as well as to his ability, if it can be stated that for a lengthened period he occupied a foremost position in the confidence and esteem of all classes of the community in such a locality.

This Mr. Shillington did for at least forty years in the town of Portadown and the part of the county of Armagh lying adjacent to it. His position as a business man has been already referred to, and it was of itself sufficient to give him a considerable degree of

prominence and influence; but it is not to this, so much as to his own personal qualities, that the relation in which he stood to his fellow-townsmen and to the people around is to be ascribed.

Mr. Shillington was chosen at a very early date as one of the Town Commissioners of Portadown, and in this office he continued uninterruptedly, by successive re-elections, for a period of nearly fifty years. He was also several times appointed to act as Chairman of the body—a position analagous to that of Mayor in corporate towns. At his funeral the Commissioners attended in their official capacity, and at their meeting immediately following his decease, a resolution was unanimously passed, expressing "sincere sorrow and deep regret" at his removal, as well as their conviction that he had discharged his duties as Commissioner and Chairman, "with credit to himself, advantage to the public, and to the entire satisfaction of the Board."

He was likewise a member of a variety of other local boards and committees; in fact, nothing was set on foot to promote the interests of the town, either by public movement or by private enterprise, in which he did not take a leading part. As the result of this his opinion was sought in many matters of great moment, his approval and co-operation being regarded as necessary to secure the success of any undertaking.

His name was for many years on the Special Jury List of his county, and in important cases he was frequently selected to act as foreman. His ability was so conspicuous in this service as to draw from eminent judges and leading lawyers high encomiums; and the opinion has been expressed by many that, if he had

been trained to the profession of the law, he would undoubtedly have reached a distinguished position. And his efficiency did not arise from the quickness and clearness of his apprehension merely, gifted as he was in these respects, or even from the extent and accuracy of his knowledge; but more particularly from the care and painstaking minutenesss with which he weighed the evidence, resolved faithfully to fulfil his important and laborious trust. The writer has now before him his notes in pencil of some heavy cases in which he acted as a juror, which, by their copiousness and minuteness, abundantly prove this fact.

It has been mentioned that he was entrusted by some of the landed proprietors in the neighbourhood with the management of their properties; and in this position, which is often a difficult and delicate one, he combined firmness with kindness. The newspaper published in the immediate locality states on this point that "Cases of eviction, if not unknown on the lands over which he had control, were at least very rare; and the last remedy which the laws allows, and which always entails suffering upon the evicted, was not resorted to until every other means of protecting the property of his client had been exhausted." And, it adds, "Whilst firm in maintaining, but not in exacting, his own rights, and the rights of those who confided their interests to his care, judgment was tempered with mercy. Firmness and determination were strongly-marked traits in his character; but these were not seldom controlled by his deep sympathy with human suffering and woe. Where principle was at stake, he was unyielding and unbending, and neither

sophistry nor ridicule had any effect in changing his opinion; but, in matters not essential, he was easily melted by a judicious, well-timed appeal."

In the year 1855 he was appointed to the Commission of the Peace for the County of Armagh. The circumstances connected with the bestowment of this distinction are of so interesting and characteristic a nature as to be worthy of being related somewhat in detail.

Under the Towns' Improvement Act the Commissioners for the time being were empowered to request His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to select one of their number to act as a magistrate for the town, and usually the gentleman who then filled the position of Chairman was the one appointed. The Portadown Commissioners made their application duly, but it so happened that the then Chairman was the late Mr. John Obins Woodhouse, who was professionally disqualified for the magistracy, being a practising attorney and solicitor; and the person chosen by the Lord Lieutenant was Mr. Shillington. But in the course of a few months Mr. Woodhouse's term of office as Chairman expired, and the late Mr. John James Marlay, to whom no such disqualification attached, was appointed in his stead. Mr. Shillington might without any impropriety have retained the honour which he had recently acquired, but he immediately placed his resignation in the hands of the authorities, requesting that Mr. Marlay might be appointed, which was accordingly done. Very shortly after, however, he received a communication from the present Earl of Charlemont, proposing to recommend him for the higher position of Magistrate for the County.

How efficiently he occupied this post and discharged the duties pertaining to it is testified by all classes of persons. The correspondent of a Belfast newspaper writes, "As a magistrate, he devoted a large portion of his valuable time to the duties of the Bench, and his decisions were marked by sound judgment, a love for rectitude, and a hatred of wrong and oppression." The newspaper published in Portadown observes, "On the Bench he was chiefly remarkable for his terse, outspoken, earnest words. He spoke as one who had authority, and was determined to use it fearlessly in the cause of truth and right. He saw through the most tangled case with unrivalled penetration; and, having seen through it, did not hesitate to give the decision which he believed to be the right one." And a gentleman, who had both the opportunity and the capability of forming a correct judgment, in speaking of him at a meeting of the Town Commissioners, stated that he desired "to testify to the impartiality, the determination, and the fearless courage which always characterised him," adding, "in his determination to do justice between man and man he feared no power, and yielded to none."

In the discharge of his public duties Mr. Shillington felt the responsibility which they involved, and ever aimed at doing the work which they required. With him nothing was merely honorary. His mind was too active and too practical to rest in anything nominal, or to be satisfied unless he contributed his full proportion of the labour required.

His position brought him into frequent correspondence with persons of note—members of the Govern-

ment and private individuals. Many letters which have been preserved, but which it might not be proper to publish, reveal the fact that he was consulted on several very important occasions by the authorities; and, although his replies are not forthcoming, it is evident from the letters which followed that his advice and influence were very judiciously exercised in the interests of the community, and that they were highly appreciated by those who sought his opinion.

There was one description of service, always difficult and not often pleasant, in which Mr. Shillington was very frequently called upon to engage—that of arbitration. If any dispute, involving interests large or small, needed to be thus arranged, his name was pretty sure to be selected by one of the parties; sometimes even it was chosen by both, so that the settlement of the affair was left altogether in his hands. Of course he did not please everybody; but all had full confidence in his fairness as well as in his ability and accuracy, and it is not too much to say that he gave very general satisfaction.

An interesting correspondence has been preserved arising out of a case of this description. Two gentlemen, who were brothers, living in another part of the county, had disagreed about a matter of business; and by mutual consent the case was referred to Mr. Shillington, in connection with the late Mr. Kirk, M.P. So delicately and satisfactorily did Mr. Shillington manage this difficult matter, that he received from each of these gentlemen a letter of thanks, accompanied by a practical expression of gratitude. One of them sending him a valuable and richly-

bound work with a handsome inscription, which says: "Pray accept the accompanying volume as a mark of the high opinion I entertain of the honourable manner in which you discharged the very painful and laborious duties imposed upon you in the arbitration between my brother and myself. None but men of great mercantile experience and of inflexible integrity could have investigated accounts of such long standing and so complicated, and come to conclusions at once both wise and just." The other in a similarly complimentary strain made a valuable presentation to Mrs. Shillington.

And in innumerable instances in a less formal way did he act the part of a mediator. Sometimes it was between persons who disputed about matters of trade; sometimes between members of families who needed to be reconciled; and sometimes in cases of misunderstanding amongst Church members. Not unfrequently he undertook long journeys, regardless of expense and fatigue, that he might give advice or assistance; seeking as his only recompense the enjoyment which arises from a sense of helping.

In politics Mr. Shillington did not take an active part. He seldom seems to have gone further than to record his vote for the candidate for a seat in Parliament of whose principles he approved. This was the more remarkable and the more to be commended, because of the strong party feeling which distinguished the locality and the fiery energy with which political questions of a particular class were discussed around him.

This abstention did, however, not arise either from indifference or cowardice. No man could be more

deeply interested than he was in the leading questions of the day, and he was uniformly honest and outspoken in the expression of his opinion. Nor was it because his views were vague or ill-defined. These he had formed very decidedly, and he tenaciously held to them, being through life what is understood as a moderate Conservative. One reason for his comparative neutrality arose from his habit of bold and independent thought. He was too broad and comprehensive to be one-sided. A party politician cannot very well avoid being a partisan, and this he found it impossible to be. He could not follow any leader with blinded eyes, but must form his own opinion, and act in accordance with his personal convictions. But it is believed that the chief cause of his passiveness is to be found in the antagonism which has unfortunately grown up between politics and spiritual religion. That there is any need for this may well be doubted; that it exists, cannot be denied. Mr. Shillington, as a Christian man, was not prepared to risk peace with God for the sake of political prominence; nor, even supposing that he might himself suffer no loss, was he willing, by his example, to encourage others in a course manifestly detrimental to the interest of their souls. That he might have been a political power in the neighbourhood all who knew him will admit; that he voluntarily pursued a more retired path is apparent; and that he did this in the exercise of a prudence dictated by the highest and purest motives, and acted wisely in doing so, will be generally agreed. At the same time he never censured others for adopting a different course; the liberty that he claimed for

himself he conceded to others. It is to be hoped that we may see the time when political life will present fewer obstacles in the way of Christian men, when the influence of religion will be felt as a mighty power in the senate house, and when the path thereto will be less perilous. Hope of the nearer approach of such a state of things may be not unreasonably entertained ; events are moving in this direction ; and it seems not impossible that ere long devoted followers of Christ may be the active leaders of public opinion to such an extent as to sweep away all that is objectionable or unsafe.

In this connection may be given a letter written in reply to an invitation to take part in the great demonstration which was held at Hillsborough when the bill for the disestablishment of the Irish Church was under consideration. It gives a fair sample of the way in which he was accustomed to look at public questions.

"PORTADOWN, 21*st Oct.*, 1867.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I CANNOT but feel flattered by what I think the undue estimate you have formed of the value of any services I could render on the occasion of the demonstration of Protestant feeling to be made at Hillsborough ; and, if I thought the integrity of Protestantism was at stake, and that this was the best mode of resisting the assault, I would not be slow to unite with those who deem it necessary to take this public mode of exhibiting their determination, although at all times unwilling to take any part in public meetings for political purposes.

"But I have not the desponding feeling respecting the interests of Protestant Christianity in this

country which seems to pervade the minds of many, and have no doubt but the Church would thrive and prosper if all its endowments were withdrawn. In fact, I think the Church is in much greater danger from its enemies within than from those without. The Ritualists in England are doing their best to bring the nation back to Popery, and it is little wonder under these circumstances that many of its own adherents turn round upon it.

I candidly confess, as a member of a church supported wholly by the voluntary contributions of its own members, that I am at least not an advocate of ecclesiastical endowments, but at the same time I make a marked difference between the endowment of truth and error; and, rather than see Popery endowed, I would prefer to see all ecclesiastical property devoted to the purposes of the State; and further, I am glad to believe that, both in the Established and Presbyterian Churches, there is a gradually increasing number of their best ministers ready to adopt this alternative without hesitation.

"I remain, dear sir,

"Faithfully yours,

"THOS. A. SHILLINGTON.

"R. H. DOLLING, ESQ."

Influence does not come by chance, nor is it retained or increased as the result of mere accident. It is usually of slow growth, being gradually built up, and it is liable to be lessened or lost at any moment; and through what may appear to be a trifling cause. Where an uncommon amount of influence has been acquired, and where it has been maintained during

an unusually lengthened period with augmenting strength, it is interesting and instructive to inquire from whence it sprang.

In Mr. Shillington's case it did not arise from any compromise of his religious principles. This seems to persons of weak minds and feeble convictions to be an easy way of making friends and of conciliating foes; but it is as ineffectual and unenduring as it is easy. Friends thus made are not fast friends; foes thus conciliated are not converted into real friends. To compromise Mr. Shillington was a stranger. What he believed to be right he adhered to and avowed, not offensively, but honestly and uniformly. Wherever he went he remembered and honoured his Master, and was all the more respected because he did so. And this applied to the particular section of the Church to which he belonged as well as to the more general aspects of religious duty. Truly catholic in his sympathies, he nevertheless cherished and declared an intelligent preference for the body to which he was attached by hereditary ties and by personal choice. A gentleman having, in conversation with him, spoken favourably of Portadown, remarked that it had one serious defect—its Methodism. "No," said Mr. Shillington, "it is its Methodism that has made it what it is."

Nor did he seek popularity by patronising what he believed to be serious error. Some Protestants do not hesitate to contribute at the funerals of Roman Catholics for masses to be said for the liberation of their souls from purgatory, while they do not believe in the existence of any such place; or to collect at

the opening services of Roman Catholic chapels, although they loudly denounce the system as contrary to the Word of God. By doing so they confirm the people in their delusions, and acquire for themselves, at all events, the suspicion of being timeservers. Less demonstrative in his opposition to the religious creed referred to, Mr. Shillington was more consistent in the course which he pursued in reference to it, uniformly declining all such engagements.

His influence was not created or increased by adventitious circumstances. He did not join in any popular cry, or ride into favour on the crest of a wave. It sprang from genuine worth, and was marked by a stability which it could not have possessed if any less valuable element had contributed largely to its bestowment. "Some minds have a powerful affinity for what is sterling and useful. Themselves strong, like loadstone, they are constantly acquiring facts, and principles, and maxims, of wisdom. They gain the respect of others. They become master spirits, moving and controlling their fellows." Thus it was with Mr. Shillington. He was a man whose presence must be felt, whose power could not but be recognised. Both in his own locality and wherever he was known, his influence was great; and it was ever exerted for the good of others. His great ability, combined as it was with moral qualities of the highest order, secured for him the confidence of the community; and that without the use of any questionable means. He did not fawn upon the gentry that he might court their favour, nor did he put himself forward as the patron of the poor; and yet he was esteemed by all classes.

His sterling excellence secured respect; his thorough integrity and straightforwardness commanded confidence.

He also possessed a very tender and sympathetic nature. His wisdom and uprightness were combined with much kindness of heart, which led him to be regarded by many as a strong and sincere friend—one on whom they could lean in a time of difficulty. It was by deeds rather than by words, spoken or written, that this was usually expressed; and yet he sometimes did utter sentiments peculiarly touching and beautiful. For example, a devoted Christian woman, whose husband had been suddenly and mysteriously removed by death, received from him soon after her bereavement a visit of condolence, in the course of which she states that he used the following words:—"It will be hard for you to believe that 'all things work together for your good,' but you may believe it. It is best for your husband, best for yourself, best for your children, best for the Church." Such sympathy could not be administered by any one who did not possess deep piety, strong common sense, and much tenderness of feeling.

A very characteristic letter, likewise illustrative of the Scriptural and manly way in which he was wont to offer sympathy, has been preserved and placed at the disposal of the writer of these pages. It is addressed to Mr. William Wallace, of Dublin; and was written shortly after the distressing news had arrived that his father, the able and beloved Rev. Robert Wallace, had died of cholera, in the city of Cincinnati, when on his way to attend the celebra-

tion of the Centenary of American Methodism, as one of the Deputation appointed by the Irish Conference. It is as follows:—

"PORTADOWN, *18th Sept.* 1866.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"My reluctance to give credit to the mournful intelligence of your dear father's unexpected death prevented my earlier tendering to you the expression of my sincere and unaffected condolence on the melancholy occasion.

"I do not know when I heard anything of the kind which has produced upon my mind such a profound sense and awe of the Divine sovereignty. Truly He renders an account of His ways to none. A more valuable life than your father's it would be scarcely possible to select, whether to his family or the Church; and in the midst of his usefulness, and just as his character had been established for maturity of wisdom and forethought, as well as for the highest integrity and disinterestedness, and when his brethren in the ministry as well as all who knew him were looking up to him for his counsel on all public questions, he is struck down, and his friends are left to mourn his loss. But it is all well. He who orders all our goings deals with His children in mercy and in love, and what we know not now eternity will make plain and clear.

"I shall always count it one of the pleasures of my life to have enjoyed the friendship and confidence of your father, and his memory will ever be sacred to me till we meet in that world where the inhabitants shall no more complain of sickness and death.

"With kindest sympathy to your mother when she returns, and to your brothers and sisters,

"I am, my dear sir,

"Faithfully yours,

"THOS. A. SHILLINGTON.

"WILLIAM WALLACE, ESQ."

And the smypathy thus accorded to the family of a distinguished minister of Christ was as freely given to the poorest and least known of those who in the range of his acquaintance were called to suffer affliction; and in cases where they were needed, sympathy was often accompanied by valuable counsel and practical aid.

With all classes he stood well. Gentlemanly, without anything of pretension, he associated with the most respectable residents in the county as an equal; familiar, without any appearance of condescension, he had a pleasant word for the humblest and the youngest. Consulted by all descriptions of persons about all manner of things, he was found ever ready to help with such good offices as might be needed; and general testimony goes to show that few ever had cause to regret that they sought his interference or followed his advice. Possessed of a strength of character not often met with, his spirit and bearing were nevertheless marked by an unassuming modesty; his manly resoluteness never degenerating into self-sufficiency or forwardness. Men of all classes honoured him, feeling that they were doing homage to real worth.

VI.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND CHURCH WORK.

CHRISTIAN character and Church work are coupled together, because, in Mr. Shillington's case they were intimately and inseparably united ; as, indeed, they ought always to be. His activity was remarkable, and it was most steadily sustained throughout a long life. Work to him was no toil ; it was at once a duty and a delight. He knew nothing of the languishing piety that is now too prevalent, whieh contents itself with a feeble attempt to keep the spark of Christian life from being utterly extinguished, but never thinks of making earnest effort for the spiritual good of others. He was an entire stranger to the religion which substitutes the patronage of what is noble or pure for personal service in promoting it, and which often amounts to little more than a money payment presented in lieu of individual labour in Christ's vineyard. Nor was his energy put forth only when extraordinary occasions arose to stimulate it. His was no spasmodic zeal, now excited to intensity, and again subsiding to a dead calm. He was habitually employed in the highest of all service. He did not very much believe in occasional fits of enthusiasm and spurts of effort, but by his own example he declared how much he valued persevering and faithful toil. In times of excitement others might seem to leave him in the

shade, but he was working diligently when many of them were negligently looking on, or spending their strength in useless and unreasonable complaints.

But some may say that Mr. Shillington's activity and energy were natural gifts, and that they were displayed in an equally striking manner in matters of temporal interest. This is fully admitted to have been the fact, but in both departments they were natural gifts consecrated and sanctified, and employed in divine service. In business engagements he was the Christian man; in church relations and employments he was the man of business. In his case it was not the worldly-wise judgment and merely natural vigour of the far-seeing and energetic merchant imported into the sacred fellowship and councils of the Church, stimulating it to action, but at the same time imparting to its enterprises a tone unspiritual and even worldly. It was the sanctification of business talent—the devotion to God and His cause of the energy of a man who felt continually that every gift he possessed was not his own, who every moment realised his responsibility; and who, with such convictions, was always intent on doing something for his Master.

Very probably the piety of successful business men, who acquire influence and are held in high esteem, is sometimes under-estimated, and the opinion is too readily formed that they are honoured in the religious community to which they belong merely on account of the position to which they have attained. That the Church of God has been injured by the exaltation to office and honour of those who had little else than their wealth or ability to recommend them cannot be

denied; but that there are enrolled amongst its office-bearers and members many prosperous and prominent men who are worthy of all the respect which they receive, and whose religious life is deeper and stronger than most are aware of, is a gladdening thought. And many instances which are now and again brought to light confirm the correctness of this view. Many, known chiefly by their commercial transactions, and whose religion appeared to observers to consist principally in being more upright and conscientious than others, prove, when the inner life is revealed, to have been very humble and very painstaking followers of Jesus. That all who were acquainted with the subject of this memoir regarded him as a straightforward and honourable man of business is pretty certain; that most of them knew that these high qualities had their foundation in the enjoyment of personal religion is very likely; but that only some had any adequate idea of the depth of his piety is highly probable. Though he did not seek to conceal his religion, he did not parade it; but, with a strong and constantly remembered sense of duty, set himself to do what he believed to be the right thing in the best possible way.

Mr. Shillington did not keep any diary or journal, and anything available from his own pen must be gleaned from his correspondence. Nor was he ordinarily very communicative as to matters of Christian experience. It would not represent him fairly to say that he was reticent, or to give the impression that he was disposed to shun conversation on religious subjects; but he was disinclined to put himself forward, and pre-

ferred to dwell upon the doctrines and privileges of the Gospel as set forth in the Scriptures, to presenting them as illustrated in his own experience. Yet at what seemed to him to be fitting times he was ready to tell what God had done for his soul. A minister who had ample opportunity of forming a correct opinion on this point, writes, "His experience was ever full of life, and light, and joy, and hope, and blessing." Uniformly in the Class-meeting, occasionally in the Love-feast, and sometimes in conversation, he declared, and always with the utmost explicitness, his personal enjoyment of the Divine favour and the closeness and blessedness of his communion with God. His idea of the way in which he could best glorify God appeared to be that *living the Gospel* should be put in the foremost position—that the words should follow the works rather than precede them. Weighty, therefore, and valuable though his words often were, we have to form our opinion of him as a Christian man by his *acts*, rather than by his professions.

In few of the relations of life is the true character of a man more clearly seen than in his intercourse with his children, and his influence over them; and this is the more fully discernible when letters are frequently interchanged between them. If a father is worldly or proud or selfish, he cannot well avoid delineating himself as he writes to his children; whereas, if he is spiritual and humble and devoted to God, he as surely transcribes his character on the page he fills. Some of the most precious relics left by the subject of these pages are the letters which he wrote to his children, and in which he expresses

himself in terms the most simple and unrestrained, incidentally placing upon record his views on matters of no small importance connected with the service of God.

At a very early age his eldest son was sent to Wesley College, Sheffield. His father wrote to him with great regularity, usually filling a large sheet; and his letters breathe a spirit of anxious solicitude for his early conversion to God, and abound with valuable practical counsels. These advices are in each instance so mixed up with matters of interest connected with home, that they never appear formal or assume the nature of a lecture. In one, for example, he gives a detailed account of his return journey after leaving his son at school, describing a visit to a cattle show at Liverpool, giving a circumstantial statement of a small accident with which his younger brother met, followed by a reference to a mishap which occurred through one of the horses running away and injuring the man who had him in charge, and a description of a rosewood cabinet which her aunt had given to one of his sisters. He then says, "Above all, my dear Thomas, fear God. Remember that He sees you at all times, even in your most retired and secret moments. Pray to Him continually that He may teach you to love Him, to obey Him, and to serve Him with all your heart; that He may preserve you from the influence of bad example in others, and that He may help you to set others a good one. Remember, it will be no excuse for you that others do what is wrong. Whatever you know, or are afraid, is wrong—no matter how trifling it may appear—avoid. Whatever you believe to be right—no matter how

others may laugh at you for it—do; and you will then be respected for your decision of character and for integrity of conduct." One cannot well conceive of better advice addressed to a lad of ten years old, just placed at a public school—advice more fitted to lay the foundation of a manly and elevated piety.

In another letter he tells of the death of two old Christian people—one eighty-three and the other ninety years of age—and afterwards relates with much minuteness the circumstances connected with the affliction and death of a young lad who had been one of his son's school-fellows. He then adds, "You see, my dear Thomas, the young as well as the old must die, and it is our wisdom as it is our duty to prepare betimes for eternity; not to put off the day of our salvation to a bed of sickness or of death, but while we are in health and in the possession of all our senses, and the use of all our faculties, to seek the Lord with all our hearts." On another occasion he gives a large amount of family news, and tells about the crops and the cattle, but he does not fail to speak about more important things. He adds, "I hope you pray to God to bless you with His fear. It is 'the beginning of wisdom.' The wise man says so; and that 'to depart from evil is understanding.' May you strive in all things to please God, and have the testimony of His approbation! May His love be early shed abroad in your heart, and its effects appear in your life!"

One more extract from the letters written to Sheffield may be permitted. It is a beautiful example of the judicious bestowment of approval and praise

When commendation is expressed wisely it is most valuable in stimulating to further effort, and parents do well when they thus encourage their children in their attempts to please them and to serve God. He appears to have received very encouraging reports as to the conduct and progress of his son, and with these he was highly pleased; but, even when conveying in warm terms his gratification, he is careful to keep before him the "one thing needful" as that which is pre-eminently important. He writes, "I am exceedingly pleased, my dear Thomas, to hear from every quarter a gratifying report of your conduct, and can hardly think of it without tears of grateful joy flowing from my eyes. It is God Himself who has thus enabled you to deport yourself so as to secure the esteem and approbation of those with whom you have had to do, and I trust you will still be enabled so to act and walk as to grow in favour with the wise and good. But, O, remember, my dear child, that even all this is nothing unless you enjoy the favour of God, and that in order to secure this you have but to humble yourself as a sinner before Him, to confess your iniquities with a lowly and penitent heart, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ who 'came to seek and to save that which was lost.' You shall then at once secure His favour, and obtain a knowledge of it—the conscious sense of sins forgiven; and, by walking in Him, you shall be enabled to grow in favour both with God and man. Be choice of your companions and playmates. No matter who he may be that would lead you into mischief or sin, associate not with him."

This may be the best connection in which to introduce a very precious letter, expressing the joy of a father's heart on receiving from herself tidings of the conversion to God of a dear child. It is addressed to his eldest daughter, who was then at school in Dublin.

"PORTADOWN, March 31.

"I received your very welcome letter of yesterday, and read it with tears of joy and gratitude to our Heavenly Father, who in His tender mercy has influenced you to give your heart to Him, and has manifested His pardoning love to your soul. And to your mamma it has been the occasion also of sincere and heartfelt joy. We will not cease to remember you at the throne of grace, or to pray that you may be enabled to hold fast whereto you have attained. And as God in His rich mercy has acknowledged you as His child, be careful and be bold to acknowledge Him in all your ways. He will direct your paths; He will save you from the power of the tempter; He will defend you in all assaults of the adversary as long as you keep looking to Him and believing in Him. Watch and pray. Live to God, and strive to glorify Him in your body and spirit, which are His. When under the power of any temptation, fly to Him for succour; and, if you find it necessary, open your mind to Miss Wood, whose counsel and experience will be advantageous. And write to your mamma and me freely all you think and all you feel. I am sure you will not doubt me when I say I always loved you with parental tenderness;

but I never loved you before as I do now, nor took such an interest in your happiness and well-being.

"Your thankful and affectionate father,

"THOS. A. SHILLINGTON."

Happy the children to whom God has given a father so fully able to enter into the feelings of their early spiritual life, and so wisely and tenderly to build them up in the faith of Jesus!

Religion was in Mr. Shillington's estimation at once a very solemn and a very joyous thing. His was not a long-faced piety, habitually wearing a gloomy and forbidding aspect. Nor was it an experience of extremes, alternating between excitement and despondency. It was very uniform, but the very reverse of uniformly dull. The expression of his countenance, the tone of his voice, the words and spirit of his prayer, all betokened a cheerful seriousness of mind. But in nothing was this characteristic so marked and so apparent as in his singing. Gifted with a noble voice, appreciating exalted and elevating sentiment, and possessing much of the divine life in his own soul, he seemed never to weary in offering praise to God. He revelled in the richness of Charles Wesley's soul-stirring hymns, entering into their spirit to an extent that has seldom been surpassed. For many years he led the songs of adoration and thanksgiving in the large congregation, and almost to the very last he did so in the prayer meetings which he attended. Having an almost unlimited range of tunes, and much taste in employing them, he gave to this part of public worship very considerable

variety and interest. He attached much importance to singing as a help to devotion; and was consequently very desirous that his children, and all for whom he was specially interested, should cultivate this talent to the utmost possible extent.

Mr. Shillington was very remarkable for his regularity and order. He knew the value of exactness and punctuality in the ordinary engagements of life; and he did not consider himself justified in being less particular, even if he were so disposed, in matters relating to the service of God and the interests of eternity. It has been already mentioned that he was never known to be late entering a place of worship, and his attendance at all meetings connected with the business of the church was marked by the same feature. He was rarely absent from his accustomed seat in the house of God, unless he was away from home or detained by sickness. No popular minister in some other place of worship, no feeble preacher in his own, had the effect of causing his place to be unoccupied. He made up his mind as to what was the right thing to do, and he steadily and conscientiously adhered to it. He did not think wandering from church to church helpful to spiritual growth, and he uniformly discountenanced it. Whoever else was wanting, he was ever at his post, as a pattern of fidelity, in the evening as well as in the forenoon of each Lord's day. Nor was his attendance confined to the Sabbath. At the week-night service, and at the early morning prayer meeting, he was almost always to be found, and ever true to time.

It might be expected that a man who was himself so orderly and exact would be somewhat severe upon the shortcomings of others, especially as he possessed much natural warmth of temper and manner; and yet he was wonderfully patient in bearing with the weaknesses and irregularities which must have greatly pained him, and sometimes he showed a very praiseworthy magnanimity. An instance of this kind may be mentioned. On one occasion having been appointed to examine the tickets of the members when a Love-feast was about being held, he refused to admit a person who had neither a society ticket nor a note of admission. This gentleman wrote to him a very angry and indeed abusive letter, complaining of his exclusion—one that because of its unkind spirit and intemperate language might well have been treated with silent contempt, or else have drawn forth a crushing rejoinder. But instead of adopting either of these courses, Mr. Shillington wrote to him a careful explanation of the usages of Methodism in this matter, and concluded as follows:—"I regret very much that you did not think proper to seek for a note of admission. I am sure your doing so would not have been a humiliating act. I have no doubt our minister would most cheerfully have given it. If I had not been at the door I would with pleasure have gone to get it for you, and I hope you would have been both pleased and profited. If anything in my manner of doing it, beyond the maintenance of the rule in its integrity, was calculated to offend or give you pain, I am entirely unconscious of it, as it was quite unintentional."

Mr. Shillington's concern to do exactly what was right in all matters relating to the work of God, received constant illustration in connection with his pecuniary contributions. His sustained and extensive liberality was truly noble. In exercising it he adopted a different course from that which finds favour with many of the wealthier professors of religion in the present day. He did not concentrate his energies on some one favourite scheme, or pour his gifts into the treasury of some particular department of Christian effort, to the exclusion of others equally deserving. His contributions were widely diffused, and were most conscientiously divided amongst the various objects which he regarded as claiming his support. In acting thus we believe he acted wisely. It is not our province to censure those who adopt a different principle; for the accomplishment of some great enterprises it may be necessary, but for general imitation we may commend the course which he pursued as being at once healthy and safe for the donor, and largely beneficial to the various interests of Christ's cause. He and his family ministered to the wants of the poor with an almost lavish liberality. He was the mainstay of the work of God in his own Circuit and neighbourhood, contributing through all the usual channels generously himself, and encouraging the liberality of others. He was the ardent and practical friend of the great missionary enterprise. And when any public object of benevolence or Christian activity was set on foot, he was ever found in his place, with his name in a respectable position on the subscription list. To secure his aid it was not

necessary to humour some whim or flatter some foible. If the undertaking commended itself to his judgment, he gave to it his help, no matter who might be its promoters, or however little he might have personally to do with its management.

Some allusions which occur in his letters to his children indicate his views on the subject of Christian liberality, and show how anxious he was that they should learn to be faithful in "the unrighteous mammon." Thus in one he writes to his son, "I am glad to learn that you go to Class-meeting, and would wish you to pay your class money weekly, and your quarterly money when you receive your ticket; and, if you have any missionary collections in the school, I would like you to contribute to that object also." Paragraphs similar to this frequently occur; and sometimes we find allusions to what was being done in connection with the different departments of the work of God in Portadown. For example, in one case he gives an account of the missionary anniversary services, closing it as follows:—"The collections, with some donations sent in, amounted to £80, being about £28 more than they ever were before." On a later occasion, when the proceeds had reached a much higher figure, and when the increase on the year was unusually large, he exclaimed with tears gushing from his eyes, as the amount was ascertained in the vestry, "Thank God that they had the heart to give it!" If exception can be taken to the mode which Mr. Shillington adopted in contributing to the support and extension of the work of God, it is on the ground that he too literally obeyed the injunction, "Let not

thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." He had a jealous and godly fear of ostentation, and only permitted his gifts to be made public when circumstances plainly required it. The extent to which he secretly ministered of his substance to those who were in need, and to the interests of religion, must remain unknown until it is declared in the great day.

The Sabbath was in his estimation a very sacred day. It was his custom on that day not only not to write any letters, but not to receive any. If this rule were adopted by Christians generally, the labours of post office *employés* would be greatly lessened, and we might hope that the Sunday delivery of letters would soon be altogether discontinued. For this reason he abstained from becoming a holder of railway shares, although local circumstances made it very desirable that he should be the proprietor of some. He considered, however, that this would make him a participator in the Sabbath traffic, and to this he could not consent. This is a question which deserves more general attention than it has received. It does seem strange that persons who would not themselves travel by rail upon the Sabbath, or on any account be personally connected with a place licensed for the sale of strong drink, and who deplore the demoralising effects of Sabbath trains and refreshment rooms at railway stations, are nevertheless willing to become partners in these very things, deriving through a somewhat circuitous channel a portion of their income from the desecration of the Sabbath, and the encouragement of intemperance. Surely they could find some mode of investing their money,

perhaps equally profitable, which would be free from the fatal objection of involving them in a partnership which commits them to the systematic propagation of evil.

Mr. Shillington was well known for his tender sympathy with suffering. Very frequent were his kind calls at the abode where anxiety was felt for a loved one whose life was in the balances, or at the home where the recent removal of a friend was mourned. Nor did position in life affect the flow of his feelings. He felt for the sorrows of the poorest and least prominent, as well as for the afflictions of those who were on a level with himself. And in his sympathy there was a strength that was very valuable; he united strong common sense and firm faith in God with an exquisite gentleness, so that his visits and kindly words were highly prized and left a lasting impression.

The relation in which Mr. Shillington stood to other denominations of Christians gave pleasing evidence of his large-heartedness. He was a Methodist, but he was a Catholic-minded Methodist, who could be decided and yet not bigoted. No man was more truly and intelligently attached to his own section of the church than he was, and yet none was on friendlier terms with both ministers and members of other communions. He knew nothing of either compromise or exclusiveness. For many years in succession he occupied the chair at the Anniversary Meetings of the Bible Society in Portadown; and on almost every important occasion, he was put by common consent into a position of prominence. He

was not a lover of notoriety. With all his manliness and vigour he was modest and unassuming, and did not court distinction. But, when it came in the way of duty, he did not shrink from it; and he seemed to be as much at home and at ease in an elevated position as he was contented and happy when a more humble place was assigned to him.

Most persons are aware that Methodism opens to those of its members who may possess the requisite piety and gifts, distinct and important spheres of usefulness; and it is generally admitted that much of the prosperity which has attended it the world over, is due to its attempt,—however imperfectly it may be carried out,—to utilize the gifts of all. It recognises the Christian Ministry as a divine institution, but it does not regard active effort for the salvation of souls and the spread of Christ's kingdom as confined to those who are "separated unto the Gospel of God." A man like Mr. Shillington could not remain long unemployed. At a very early period his qualifications for usefulness were recognised, and as time progressed he was appointed to various offices of great importance. Some of these were not distinctly spiritual, though of such a character as could only be filled efficiently by spiritual men, involving as they did some of the highest interests of the church of Christ as well as much responsibility and labour. Thus, for example, his name was included in the list of trustees for almost every Methodist chapel for miles round; and no committee on his Circuit or district, for whatever purpose formed, was considered to be complete without him.

Just now, however, we wish to confine ourselves to the work connected with his own Circuit, in which he was continuously engaged during a long succession of years, and in the discharge of which he presented a noble example of faithfulness and efficiency.

For an unusually lengthened period he filled the office of Circuit Steward, being annually re-elected to this position about forty times by the unanimous vote of the Circuit Quarterly Meeting. It may be judged how highly his services in this capacity were prized, when a course well nigh unprecedented was adopted in a Circuit which from time to time contained many men who were eminently fitted for such a post. The writer of these pages first met Mr. Shillington in the year 1848, in the District Meeting which the former attended as a probationer in the Wesleyan ministry, and the latter as Steward of the Portadown Circuit; and the acquaintance then formed speedily ripened into friendship which increased in strength until the period of Mr. Shillington's lamented death. Thirteen of the intervening years were spent by the writer in that district, and during six of them he was stationed in the Portadown Circuit, and consequently he has enjoyed abundant opportunity of observing him under a great variety of circumstances, and of marking his great efficiency. The records of the district and of the Circuit show that from the time of his first appointment to this office, Mr. Shillington was scarcely ever absent from his post. Not pleasure merely, but the pressing claims of business, were made to bow to the demand which God's work made upon his time and attention.

And in the proceedings on these occasions he was accustomed to take a very active part. In the District Minutes his name is associated with almost every important resolution which was passed during that lengthened period, and not a few of the decided improvements which have been made in the Methodist system in late years, especially as regards financial arrangements, had his name connected with them at a very early stage. The better provision made in 1839 for our worn-out ministers and ministers' widows, and the increase, at a later date, of ministerial allowances, may be particularly mentioned.

But Mr. Shillington's work was not confined to what concerned the temporal interests of the Church of God. Over its property and its funds he watched carefully; but he regarded these as only means for the accomplishment of an end truly spiritual and glorious, and in the attainment of that end he sought to have some personal share. With this view he laboured most diligently, and with marked success, as a class leader and a prayer leader. In these branches of Christian service he was associated with a noble band of fellow-labourers. Some of them still survive, and to these we cannot more particularly allude. Others have fallen asleep, but their names will not soon die. Men like William Paul, and Hugh Mathews, and Harford Montgomery, with a host of others, are not easily forgotten. Of the first named the late Rev. John F. Mathews wrote, "He was a wise counsellor, and a generous and disinterested friend. He had a discriminating and well-furnished mind. His Christian experience was well matured, and he

was mighty in prayer." The second was a simple-hearted and devoted man, who possessed an influence for good seldom equalled amongst the rural population around him. He was noted for his love of the Scriptures and of Wesley's hymns. The latter he was accustomed to quote with peculiar copiousness in his prayers and exhortations; and of the former he said not long before his death, "I seldom read any book now but the Bible; I never saw such beauty in it." Mr. Montgomery, too, was a man of deep piety and great fidelity, remarkable for his "patient continuance in well-doing." He lived a blameless life, and died a triumphant death. And these are but a few out of very many who were themselves witnesses of the power of Christ to save, and who were made an incalculable blessing to the Methodist Church in Portadown and its vicinity, and to the community at large.

Mr. Shillington's success as a Class-leader was very marked, and was sustained for a lengthened period. His Class met at seven o'clock on the Sabbath morning during the summer season, and at eight in winter; yet, until his own strength began to fail, he had seldom fewer than forty names enrolled in his Class-book, and the average attendance usually ranged from twenty-five to thirty. Few leaders have more thoroughly secured and retained the esteem and affection of their members than he did; and such was the general respect in which he was held that in times of revival he was sure to gain a very large share of accessions. Yet he did not often, except in cases of sickness or trial, visit his

members at their own houses; but he never failed to recognise them when he casually met them, and usually took the opportunity of giving to them a word of kindly counsel and encouragement. One of his members who passed before him to the skies (and she was a person well able to form a just opinion), recorded her estimate of him as a Class-leader in these few but expressive words—"To know him you must meet in Class with him." One feature by which he was very distinctly marked was his constant possession of a thankful spirit. He always had some reason for giving praise to God. This was pleasing to those who were similarly grateful, while it helped to chase the fears of the doubting and to raise the hopes of the sorrowful. At the same time he was a very faithful leader, occasionally even severely faithful. He never dealt with people superficially or advised them in general terms. He would sift their experience to the bottom, so as fully to understand their state; but there was in his fidelity a manly tenderness which appeased wrath and aided amendment, combining in the happiest way the wisdom and tenderness of a father. He was also distinguished for the abundant and appropriate use which he made of the Word of God in his replies and advices. He "brought out of his treasures things new and old," and the suitable passage of Scripture seemed never to be wanting.

Perhaps in no place was Mr. Shillington's influence more beneficially felt, nor was he seen to greater advantage than in the Leaders' Meeting. He possessed commanding influence, and whatever views he advocated were pretty sure to be adopted; but he was very

sparing in its use, and seldom interfered until his less gifted brethren had sufficiently stated their opinion, and then he usually spoke with a moderation which showed remarkable wisdom and self-control. He had a high respect for the laws and usages of Methodism, and for those to whom their administration is committed. Hence the Superintendent Minister was ever certain of being sustained by him in the discharge of his duties in the most true-hearted way, and not the less if he happened to be young and inexperienced. The only occasions on which he seemed inclined to make his power felt was when he discovered a disposition to set aside our economy, or to manifest disrespect towards those on whom a heavy responsibility was placed. Then indeed he could be crushingly severe, and few who felt the weight of his rebukes were inclined again to expose themselves to a similar infliction. But except on very rare and trying occasions his manner was genial and pleasant, and even his mode of dealing with the faults and failings of others was not calculated to give pain. The following is an instance in point. A certain brother, possessing more piety than judgment, had earned for himself the character of being a complete bore. He regularly attended the Circuit Quarterly Meeting, and at a particular stage was accustomed to deliver a homily full of sage but stereotyped advices. This became quite an institution, and afforded to the listeners more amusement than profit. It was then, and is still, the custom for a few of the principal brethren in rotation to supply a repast of which all the members of the meeting partake. On this occasion Mr. Shillington was to

furnish the luncheon, and the hour for it arrived while the prosy brother was discharging his self-imposed duty. True to his love of order Mr. Shillington rose and said, "Mr. Chairman, I propose that we adjourn for lunch. Brother ——'s good address will keep warm, but the coffee won't." Of course nothing further was heard of the well-known and well-meant counsels for that day.

The office of Prayer-leader is regarded in the Portadown Circuit as one of high importance; and with indefatigable zeal and perseverance Mr. Shillington discharged its duties during a lengthened period of time. In this part of the country not only are prayer-meetings held in places where stated congregations have been formed in connection with the regular services and at other times, but a net-work of meetings of this description is spread over the town and neighbourhood for several miles around, assuming the character of evangelistic services; and in conducting these, brethren of standing and influence are united with those who are younger and less experienced. By these means the work of God has often been carried into districts hitherto unreached; Society Classes have been formed, and many souls have been saved.

In this department of Christian service Mr. Shillington took great delight, and was very useful. The longest journeys and the most discouraging places were often assigned to him; but in all kinds of weather he ever went cheerfully and faithfully to do his Master's work, and thus set a worthy example to younger men. The meetings were held for the most part in private houses, chiefly those belonging to

small farmers; and he was always a welcome visitor, the people looking forward to the day when his name stood upon the "plan" with peculiar pleasure. Free and familiar with those he met, they were equally at home with him; and, on whatever other occasion the attendance might be small, he was pretty sure to see every seat occupied. It was not his custom to exhort much, but several things in his mode of conducting a cottage service tended to make him an established favourite. One was his punctuality. Every one knew that his presence might be calculated on, and that he would not be a moment late; and they knew that he would be as punctual in closing the service as in comenmcing it. Another was his lively singing, which had a wonderful charm for all. Perhaps *hearty* is a more suitable word by which to describe it, as, spirited though it ever was, there was nothing in it to which the most serious could take exception. A third was his power in prayer. People who go to such places love to get near to God, and he helped them to do so. His prayer was so confident, yet so reverent; so comprehensive, yet so minute; so sensible, and yet so touching. Then his manner of reading the Scriptures was very expressive and beautiful, and brought out, in a manner very attractive and edifying, the true meaning of the Word of God. These things, with his beaming countenance, his affable manner, his inquiries—generally by name—for friends and connections almost innumerable, and the general savour of godlinesss which he carried about with him, led old and young to welcome him with no ordinary gladness.

VII.

CHURCH WORK OF WIDER RANGE.

MR SHILLINGTON'S activity and usefulness were not merely local. Belonging to a section of the Church whose organization is very compact and very complete, and which seeks to employ in every available way the talent of those who are technically called "laymen," he found at an early date a congenial sphere of action, which he continued to fill with increasing efficiency until laid aside by his last affliction.

His first appearauce in connection with the more general interests of Methodism appears to have been in the year 1827. That year the Conference was held for the first time in Belfast, the late Rev. Richard Watson being President: and Mr. Shillington attended the meeting of the Chapel Fund Committee as the representative of the Newry District. He was further appointed to act as one of the treasurers of the fund, which indicated that even then a high opinion was formed of his ability and wisdom. It was at that time the custom to change the lay treasurer frequently, so that he did not continue in that office very long; but in the year 1861 he was reappointed to it, holding it until his death in conjunction successively with the Rev. Messrs. William Crook, senr., John Nelson, and W. Guard Price. In the business of the Chapel Committee he always took a special interest. Originated as it was in the part of the

country to which he belonged, and in a time of serious connexional agitation, and having been mainly organized by his own father, it were no wonder if he had attached to it an exaggerated and even exclusive importance. Such, however, was not the case. He took for many years a leading part in its management, but he was quite prepared to take his share in other departments of service, and in the course of a long and active life the width of his sympathies and the extent of his knowledge, as affecting all matters bearing upon the moral and spiritual interests of the community, received constant illustration.

One of the earliest enterprises of an educational kind undertaken by the Methodist Church in Ireland was the establishment of the Wesleyan Connexional School. The following is the substance of the account given by the Rev. Dr. Cather of the preparatory stages of this project, which has proved so successful. At a breakfast party in Portadown in the year 1843, Mr. Shillington read a letter which he had received from the Rev. John Kerr Johnston, A.B., who was at that time a master in Taunton Wesleyan College,* suggesting the necessity and practicability of having a similar school in Ireland. Dr. Cather happened to be present, and was greatly impressed with the idea. Mr. Shillington encouraged him to take it up, with a view to its practical application, promising his earnest counsel and co-operation—a

* Mr. Johnston was son of the Rev. James Johnston. He had been engaged in the Irish Methodist Ministry; but, his health failing, he had retired, and accepted the position mentioned above.

promise which he amply fulfilled. The late Rev. William Stewart was appointed Chairman of the Provisional Committee, and Dr. Cather and Mr. Shillington, Honorary Secretaries; and in the course of two years the school was opened in the city of Dublin, where it still remains in active operation. Mr. Shillington continued to take a deep interest in its prosperity, and was to the end an active member of its Board of Trustees and Committee of Management.

In 1855 a very spirited and comprehensive scheme for the increase of Wesleyan Agency in Ireland was set on foot. It grew out of a proposal made the previous year to extend the basis of the Wesleyan Connexional School so as to afford the ministers of the Irish Conference an opportunity of securing for their sons a better education than was previously within their reach. A committee was appointed with a view to the accomplishment of this object, and the result of its deliberations was, that it was determined to combine some other desirable suggestions with this one, all tending to the consolidation and extension of the work of God. To carry out this enlarged design a Breakfast Meeting was held in the Victoria Hall, Belfast; the Rev. John Farrar, President of the Conference, being in the chair, and the late Thomas Farmer, Esq., and many other influential friends being present. The first resolution was seconded by Mr. Shillington, the mover and supporter being the late Rev. Thomas Waugh and the Rev. William Arthur, M.A. It affirmed the suitability of Methodism for promoting, in connection with the other branches

of the Protestant Church, the evangelization of the Romish population, as proved by the success afforded to it in times past. Other resolutions followed, in which the entire scheme was shadowed forth, embracing an increase in the number of ministers, the establishment of scriptural schools amongst the neglected and poor, the erection of an educational institution for the sons of our people similar to those in England and America, and the building of ministers' residences where such were required. A sum exceeding eight thousand pounds was subscribed at the meeting for these purposes, which was afterwards very largely increased. It was proposed also that the Rev. Dr. Scott should be appointed as a deputation to visit America for the prosecution of this object ; and that the Rev. William Arthur and Alderman McArthur be requested, if possible, to give their valuable aid for a limited period. The entire plan was very cordially accepted by the Conference ; and, amongst the arrangements made by it, Mr. Shillington was appointed to act as treasurer in conjunction with the late Rev. Dr. Masaroon. His name also appears as one of the deputation appointed to visit the northern division of the country in behalf of the project.

The success of this comprehensive undertaking has been very remarkable, showing that the Head of the Church has been pleased to give it His blessing. The number of ministers engaged in the active work in 1874 is 159, as against 106 in 1855, being an increase of no fewer than 53 in nineteen years ; and during the same period the circumstances of Irish Methodist Ministers have been much improved, both by the

erection of a large number of commodious residences, and the increase of their income in all cases by at least one half, and in some to double the amount formerly received.

Out of this scheme there also sprang the Belfast Methodist College—a truly noble institution, which furnishes a remarkable proof of what can be accomplished by a comparatively small number of persons, if they are animated by a spirit of zeal and perseverance and aided by the divine blessing. At the outset a friendly contention arose as to its location. Three places sought the honour—Dublin, the metropolitan city, which was central and had already established in it the Connexional School as a basis for the contemplated college, and which enjoyed the advantages afforded by that justly celebrated and ancient seat of learning, Trinity College; Belfast, the capital of Ulster, where one of the Queen's Colleges had recently been established, and which possessed a rapidly growing and Protestant population, and was within easy reach of those Circuits containing the largest membership; and Portadown, a thriving and healthy town, very conveniently situated for north and south, where a good site could be obtained on easy terms, and where the numerical strength and social influence of Methodism was in advance of any other locality in Ireland.

A very spirited debate took place at the meeting of the committee on the 21st June, 1860, the Rev. Dr. Waddy, President of the Conference, occupying the chair. The Rev. William Arthur advocated the selection of Belfast, urging its claims with great

power. The Rev. Dr. Appelbe pleaded for Dublin, where his *alma mater* is situated, with characteristic warmth and energy. Portadown was represented by Mr. William John Paul, with such effect that it was chosen by a majority of the Committtee as the locality of the future institution. Circumstances, however, arose afterwards which made it necessary to review this decision, and the building was ultimately erected in Belfast. This selection rendered it essential that the Connexional School should be continued in Dublin; and, although it was feared by many that the two institutions could not be sustained in Ireland, they are now both in active operation, and do not appear in the slightest degree to conflict with each other.

In 1865 Mr. Shillington was appointed a member of the Senate of the Queen's University in Ireland. In this highly honourable position he rendered signal service, not merely to the religious body to which he belonged, but to Protestant truth generally, by watching over its interests in connection with the higher branches of education. This was especially the case when he united with others in resisting an attempt made, with the view of giving government sanction and aid to the Roman Catholic University, to unsettle the fundamental principles upon which the Queen's Colleges in Ireland were established.

While Mr. Shillington thus took a leading part in the promotion of a superior education, especially amongst Methodists, he was far from being indifferent to the general educational interests of the country. Yet he felt himself in a difficulty, inasmuch as he saw

in all existing systems what he conceived to be serious blemishes. The national system of education in Ireland, as it is carried out in the model schools established in various parts of the country, had his complete approval. These are very well managed and successful institutions. They are entirely under the direction of the Commissioners of Education, who are solely responsible for the instruction given in the various branches of secular knowledge. Religious teaching is provided for, by setting apart stated times, when it may be communicated by the ministers of the several denominations, or by persons appointed by them. In the non-vested schools, however, which are by far the most numerous, a sectarian complexion cannot easily be avoided; and to this feature of the system Mr. Shillington most decidedly objected. They are open, it is true, at all times to inspection by officers of the Board, and may be visited by the general public; children of all creeds are admissible to them, and certain safeguards are adopted to prevent their religious views being tampered with; yet their constitution is such as inevitably tends to denominationalism. They are in each case under the direction of a local committee, which appoints one of its number to act as manager; and in his hands very generally all control is vested, subject to the general rules of the Board. In addition to the denominational tinge received from the particular religious bias of the manager, schools of this description are usually held in premises connected with some place of worship, which of course very distinctly stamps a certain "ism" upon each one that is so circumstanced.

Perhaps, because of his disapproval of this part of the system, Mr. Shillington stood too much aloof from efforts for the establishment of day-schools for the humbler classes. In his general views he did not differ much from many who took a more active part in promoting them; they saw in it much the same faults as he did, but they thought it better to avail themselves of it with these drawbacks, in order to avoid more serious evils. Recognising this substantial unity of opinion, his counsel was gladly sought and highly valued when important questions relating to the education of the country arose. Thus in 1868, when the General Education Committee was asked to send forward the names of two or three gentlemen suitable to be examined before the Royal Commission on Education, of which Earl Powis was chairman, his was one of those selected. It so happened that his services were not required; but the gentleman who was examined expressed very similar views to those which Mr. Shillington entertained. In a letter to the latter giving an account of the proceedings, the objectionable feature of the National system, already alluded to, is distinctly stated, and the opinion is recorded that Irish Methodists co-operate with it just because it is the best help they can come at. When asked what he would substitute for it, the reply was, that "the State should confine itself to purely secular education, conducted under the direction of paid officers." On the back of this letter Miss Shillington writes: "I remember this well. My father gave us the letter to read; and, on my asking him what he thought of the examination, he said had he been

there his answers would have been substantially the same."

And his interest in the increase of knowledge was recognised beyond the limits of the immediate circle in which he usually moved. In the year 1867, when the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science met in Belfast, Mr. Shillington was appointed one of the Vice-Presidents of the Educational Department.

The deep interest which he evinced in the work of Foreign Missions has already been alluded to, nor was he less solicitous for the prosperity of Home Missionary operations. To promote them he frequently visited adjoining, and, when requested, even distant Circuits. In most instances on such occasions he occupied the chair, and, wherever he went, he uniformly inspired amongst the lovers of Zion a spirit of courage and liberality.

Mr. Shillington was no agitator, in fact his views on many points were conservative in the extreme; but, when he considered changes to be necessary, he did not shrink from using constitutional means to promote them. He also freely expressed his judgment that modifications should be made freely and gracefully—that it was not wise to postpone them until wide-spread dissatisfaction prevailed and clamour arose. Under such circumstances he considered that neither party was in a position rightly to determine what should be asked or what should be conceded, while any change made had the appearance of being the result of pressure rather than of conviction. He was long of opinion that the Home Missionary affairs, and

indeed all departments of the Church's work involving the raising and administration of funds, should be managed by a mixed rather than by an exclusively ministerial committee. In the May District Meeting of 1847 he moved the following resolution: "That, in the opinion of this District Committee, the addition of a number of lay members as representatives of Districts to the Committee of the Contingent Fund would increase the interest in its favour amongst the members of our Societies." This recommendation was carried unanimously, and was forwarded to the Conference. That body, however, did not consider it expedient at that time to adopt this suggestion, and only modified the Committee of Distribution by combining the Chairmen of Districts of the past year with those just appointed. A similar request was the same year addressed to the British Conference from some of the Districts and Circuits in England, and granted by it, which led Mr. Shillington the following year to propose in his District Meeting a strongly worded resolution on the subject. It was, however, withdrawn on an assurance being given that the matter would come before the Conference in another form. This understanding, however was not fully or effectively carried out, and four years later he wrote the following letter on the subject to the late Rev. Thomas Waugh:—

"PORTADOWN, June 26th, 1852.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I should be very sorry to trespass upon your valuable time during the sittings of Conference; but, considering the subject on which I am about to ad-

dress you one of great importance, and the present a very critical juncture in the affairs of our Connexion in Ireland, I take the liberty of doing so without further apology.

"I believe you are aware that it was on *my* raising the question in our District Committee some years ago, that an overture was made to the Conference to open the Contingent Fund Committee to laymen from the several Districts in the kingdom. This not having been complied with, the same question was introduced to the next May meeting of the District Committee; and, after a lengthened conversation, I withdrew my motion on the undertaking of two of the ministers then present that they would bring the matter before the next Conference for reconsideration. My motive for leaving the matter in their hands was, that the concession might be made by the ministers themselves without any appearance of lay interference, and thus be more graceful on the part of the Conference, and much more acceptable to the people generally. The affair was not taken up by the parties so heartily as I had hoped, and the agitated and convulsed state of the Connexion in England prevented my taking any further steps since that time, lest it might be thought by those who did not know me that I felt any sympathy with the agitators of our Zion; and knowing that times of disturbance are unfavourable for the calm and dispassionate consideration of questions of general policy.

"I had but one object in view in raising the question, and that was to render the Contingent Fund more productive, by increasing the general interest in its favour

amongst our people. I believe this cannot be done without admitting lay representatives of the Districts to the Committee of Distribution, and that this desirable result would be secured to a very considerable extent by such a change.

"There is no novelty in the principle involved in this proposal. It has already been conceded in other cases, where in committees of finance, as in the Building and Chapel Fund and the District Committees, lay representation has been adopted; and in the English Connexion the Committee analagous to the one in question is a mixed one.

"I believe the present is a most favourable moment for the consideration of this question by the Conference. Most of the ministers with whom I have conversed on the subject admit its propriety, and say that it is but a question of time and opportunity. But the fitting time for such changes may be allowed to pass, and I do now respectfully submit to you whether the present Conference should not spontaneously, and of its own motion, adopt it, and by this means add greatly to its value in general estimation; and, if such a proposal should be made by yourself, I have little doubt but it would be heartily adopted, and it would not only enhance the boon, but add one to the many other claims you already possess on the grateful and affectionate respect of our people.

"I cannot tell you with what reluctance I have ventured to trespass upon your attention. Nothing but a sense of duty has impelled me, and a firm conviction that if the present opportunity is lost, another such may not soon return. I have not made the question

the subject of remark at any of our popular meetings, or even in private conversation with lay members like myself. I have raised it in the District Committees, and discussed it with Ministers ; but not at Leaders' Meetings. From what has transpired, however, at the meeting of the Building and Chapel Fund Committee preparatory to the present Conference, I have reason to believe that the subject is likely to be freely discussed, and the proposed change pressed upon the consideration of the Conference in another year. I greatly deprecate any agitation of the question out of doors, as well as the necessity for it ; and, having laid my thoughts freely before you, and ventured to offer the suggestions which I do, I leave the matter in your hands for the present, with the conviction that I have freed myself from a serious responsibility, and the hope and prayer that you may be guided to such results as will be most conducive to the peace and prosperity of our Connexion.

"I remain, my dear Sir,

"Yours very faithfully and truly,

"THOS. A. SHILLINGTON.

"REV. THOS. WAUGH."

To this appeal Mr. Waugh returned the following reply, characteristic alike of his true-hearted interest in the work of God, his genuine kindness, and the tenacity with which he clung to views now entirely abandoned, and for which one wonders how so able and so good a man ever thought it worth his while to contend :—

"BANDON, July 5th, 1852.

"MY DEAR MR. SHILLINGTON,

"I HAD not a moment during the remainder of the Conference to reply to yours. We did not separate until eleven o'clock on Friday night, and next morning I had to set off for home, and could not till now sit down to request you to pardon my apparent neglect, and to believe that I entertain such an opinion of your head and heart as to cause me to attend respectfully to whatever you suggest.

"At the same time, I fear we shall not think alike on the subject of your letter. I am firmly convinced that nothing likely to promote our connexional interest could result from altering the mode of dividing the aid apportioned to Districts to enable the respective Circuits to meet their several obligations, but the contrary. By slow degrees, from a state bordering on bankruptcy, and by such sacrifices as never were made by men in similar circumstances, we were able at last to make our expenditure and income meet; which never could have been accomplished but by the personal efforts of the preachers, under such direction and stimulus as could only have been brought to bear by the Conference. And a long experience convinces me, that we never can expect effectual aid from one friend in ten thousand in raising the funds essential to our existence, make what alterations we may. Unless the preachers undertake the labour, the yearly and all other local collections must fall through in a very short time, and all be lost. To alterations, not evi-

dently improvements, I am averse ; but if, as you seem to think, many preachers differ from me in opinion, I shall not long stand in their way, as, previous to the arrival of your letter, I had taken steps to withdraw, at the end of this year, from all public concerns, and thus escape from a weight of anxieties and distressing feelings that I have borne so long only at such entreaty on the part of my brethren as I could not resist. That is now nearly at an end, and I trust and pray that the cause I have long and dearly loved and laboured for, will, under the Divine sanction and blessing, flourish more abundantly than ever.

"For yourself, believe me, I entertain sincere respect and regard, and pray the abundant blessing of God—*our father's God*—on you and yours.

"Believe me to be,

"Dear Mr. Shillington,

"Truly and affectionately yours,

"THOS. WAUGH.

"T. A. SHILLINGTON, ESQ."

This correspondence places in juxtaposition two of the leading men of Irish Methodism, and is highly creditable to both. Though differing in their views as to modes of operation, they aimed at the attainment of the same object, and now, "seeing eye to eye," they have begun to reap their reward in the blessed home above.

The change which Mr. Shillington advocated was not much longer delayed, as at the very next Conference—that of 1853—it was resolved to associate a lay gentleman from each District with the Chairman, who

should together form the Committee of Distribution. The next May, Mr. Shillington was, as might be expected, chosen as the first representative from his District; and from that time his name regularly appeared as a Member of this Committee. During the interval it has undergone some modifications, both as to name and constitution; but the principle then admitted has been adhered to, and so agreeable and successful has been its operation, that we now find it hard to believe that it was ever regarded by godly and sensible men with such distrust and apprehension.

The subject of the union of the two principal bodies of Methodists in Ireland has been for some years before their respective Conferences, and committees have been appointed on both sides with the view of promoting it. Although an organic union has not yet been accomplished, this course of action has not only had the effect of smoothing down asperities, but also of fostering a genuine esteem and love on both sides amongst ministers and members. Mr. Shillington was a member of the Committee appointed for this purpose by the Wesleyan Conference in 1870, but the failure of his health prevented him from taking any active part in its business. It may, however, surprise some to know that as early as the year 1853 this subject occupied his attention, and that at the date mentioned he was in communication with some influential members of our Society with the view of bringing the matter forward. No suitable occasion for doing so seems to have then presented itself; but when it was proposed it secured his hearty approval, and at each stage he

lent to it, so long as he was able to do so, his valuable support.

In many other undertakings affecting the interests of religion he took a prominent part. He was from the beginning a director of the *Irish Evangelist*, a journal to which Methodism in Ireland owes a debt of gratitude. He was Treasurer of the fund connected with the publication of the widely-circulated volume on Proportionate Giving, entitled *Gold and the Gospel.* He aided both by counsel and contribution the Systematic Beneficence Society, and was in fact "ready to every good word and work."

It is interesting to consider how it was that Mr. Shillington came to possess the remarkable influence which he undoubtedly wielded; how it was that he was welcomed as the effective supporter of every benevolent and godly enterprise within his reach, and was ever placed by general consent in a foremost position. He was not a speechmaker, seldom occupying more than a few minutes in stating his views, and then being usually energetic rather than fluent in his style of address. He was a generous man, and gave largely to various objects; but as his liberality was spread over a wide surface, in particular instances he often seemed to be excelled by others. On these grounds, therefore, we can scarcely account for his admitted pre-eminence.

One thing which struck most forcibly all who came into contact with him was his large-heartedness and public spirit. It did not seem possible for him to take a narrow or selfish view of a question, and he was therefore all the better fitted to be a

representative man. He brought to bear upon church matters principles and views that were truly statesmanlike. Then he had a wonderful power of mastering facts. All his details could be relied upon. They were not gathered at random or carelessly grouped. They were acquired with painstaking diligence, and arranged most thoughtfully, before they were propounded. Consequently, while he always spoke briefly, he was pretty sure to speak to purpose; and so conclusive frequently were his remarks, that in many an instance after him "they spake not again." Another striking characteristic was his uniform good temper. Ever earnest, sometimes vehement, he had nevertheless complete control over his spirit and words. His emphasis might now and then be so marked as to give the impression that he was severe; any one could see that he had the power, if he chose to employ it, of being terribly sarcastic; but he never manifested a spirit that was un-Christian, or uttered a word that was ungentlemanly or unbrotherly. Every one felt that he was a sincere and warm-hearted friend, and that he was gifted with a large share of sagacity and practical wisdom, which was ever at the service of any worthy object.

The last Conference which he attended was that held in Dublin in June, 1870. He was evidently not as well as usual, and did not take so prominent a part in the proceedings of the Committees of Review as he was accustomed to do; and he left town before they were concluded. It proved to be the beginning of the end, and when the next year came round he was quite disabled. The Conference of 1871 directed a letter

of sympathy to be sent to him, in which the following paragraph occurs: "The Conference gratefully remembers the many and varied services which you have rendered to our beloved Methodism, and especially in relation to the Chapel Fund. You have been one of our most highly esteemed and trusted friends, and your name has become throughout our Connexion in this country a household word."

VIII.

TIMES OF REVIVAL.

BLESSED and extensive revivals of religion, which are but the old Gospel clothed with new and living power, are not unknown in the history of Irish Methodism; and of some of them the county of Armagh has been the scene, and especially the neighbourhood of Portadown. Possibly in overwhelming and wide-spread visitations Fermanagh has had the pre-eminence; but if in this respect the latter county may be regarded as the Cornwall of Ireland, Armagh may claim to be its Yorkshire or its Lincolnshire. An exact observer of men and things, who was acquainted with Mr. Shillington from his boyhood, states concerning the earlier period of his religious life that "He joined heartily in the various revivals with which the Wesleyan Church has been visited." This is an important testimony to an important fact, going back as it does to a time long antecedent to that reached by the personal knowledge of the writer of these pages. He consecrated to the work of God the fervour of youth, the vigour of manhood, and the ripeness of age. With him its claims were paramount, and to them everything was made to bow. He was for the most part present at the special services held during such times of visitation, and frequently took part in conducting them. He usually led the songs of praise, and cheered

all classes of workers by his hearty sympathy and co-operation. His aid was also very valuable in following up such periods of blessing, gathering many into his Society Class, and watching over them most carefully. He did not satisfy himself with merely patronizing efforts to lead precious souls to Christ; he united in them, humbly and zealously taking his share of the hallowed toil.

Several interesting particulars have been supplied by the Rev. John Nash of a remarkable religious awakening which took place in that district of country in the year 1832, but on this we cannot linger. It must suffice to place on record a few facts relating to individuals who took a leading part in promoting it. The late Rev. Edward Hazelton had been the previous year appointed Superintendent Minister of the Circuit, and found it low as to its spiritual life. He is described by Mr. Nash as "a personation of perfect love—a man who lived in its element and diffused its influence." He was indefatigable in his labours, and his style of preaching was at once faithful and familiar. His colleague describes him thus: "His conversation was preaching, and his preaching was conversation." Nobly aided by a choice band of Class Leaders and Local Preachers these men of God set themselves to promote the salvation of souls, and their united endeavours were crowned with abundant success. Mr. Nash's narrative states that "the sacred fire ran quickly, and spread throughout the Circuit; field meetings and additional services were organized, and in every part of it there was a gracious movement, which soon spread to the surrounding Circuits." The result

numerically was that the numbers in Society increased from 892 to 1,250.

This time of power was marked by the deepening of the work of grace in the hearts of believers, as well as by extensive ingathering. It is Mr. Nash's impression that Mr. Shillington then for the first time realised by faith in Christ the enjoyment of the "perfect love" which "casteth out fear;" as did also many others. One of these was Mrs. Miller, of Annagh, near Portadown. Some years after, being very ill, the Rev. John Nelson, who still survives, and is the "father" of the Irish Conference, called to visit her. It was in the twilight of a Sabbath evening in summer, and she was reclining on a sofa. The conversation went out on the times just referred to, and many persons were mentioned by name who had at that period received special blessings. Some of these had died happily, and Mrs. Miller expressed her confidence that she would soon join the beloved circle before the throne. "Fatigued by the exertion, she leaned her head upon the pillow. They thought she slept; but in that solemn and happy moment her ransomed and blood-washed spirit had joined the celestial band." Mrs. Miller was a native of the West Indies, and had been the wife of the Rev. William Wilson, one of the early Missionaries to those Islands. Mr. Wilson was appointed to the Tanderagee Circuit in the year 1819, but caught fever and died soon after the Conference. In the Minutes of the following year it is stated that he "possessed a sound understanding, deep piety, and highly acceptable talents; and God was pleased to

crown his labours with success. Of him it may be truly said—

> 'His preaching *much*, but *more* his practice wrought,
> A living sermon of the truths he taught.'"

It was during the time of Mr. Hazelton's appointment that the second Methodist Chapel was built. It was erected on the west side of Thomas-street, and was a plain but commodious structure. In the basement story was a large schoolroom, and at one side a house in which the Superintendent Minister resided.

The great revival of 1859 was an event never to be forgotten, and as the visitation was so wonderful in its extent and power, we may be permitted to dwell upon it somewhat more in detail. Some time previously a remarkable awakening had taken place in the United States of America, and the hearts of earnest Christians in this country were thrilled as they read of such scenes as those witnessed at the Fulton-street prayer meeting, New York, and which were narrated in Prime's *Power of Prayer*, and in the religious journals of the day. Before long a similar movement began to be manifested in our own land. In the neighbourhood of Connor, County Antrim, and in adjacent parts of the country, a powerful influence came upon the people early in the year. It soon extended to the populous town of Belfast; and during the summer, in streets and fields, as well as in places of worship, multitudes were convinced of sin, of whom a large proportion were enabled to rejoice in the personal experience of the pardoning love of God. Possibly no more signal victories were won for Christ than in the church of

the late Rev. Thomas Toye, Great George's-street. He was a zealous minister of the Presbyterian Church, and had long laboured faithfully and successfully; now, however, he was permitted to see such an ingathering as even he had not ventured to anticipate. Indeed, in this movement, the section of the Church to which Mr. Toye belonged was especially honoured. It originated in a district in which the majority of the people belong to that communion, and in almost every part of Ulster its ministers and elders were actively employed in promoting it. Other denominations bore their part, but the Presbyterian body led the way in activity and zeal, and reaped the largest proportion of the results.

While various parts of the North were thus revived, an anxious state of feeling prevailed amongst the lovers of Zion in Portadown. So far as Methodism was concerned, a steady improvement had been taking place for three or four years, and cases of conversion were becoming more frequent than formerly. The year immediately preceding had been an unusually successful one, and a number of young men were converted, who afterwards became very useful. The Conference of that year was held in Belfast, and the writer was reappointed to the Portadown Circuit, with the Rev. J. J. Landers as his colleague. Meantime Mr. John Shillington, youngest brother of the subject of this sketch, with others, had visited some of the districts where the revival prevailed, and the result of our combined observations was a deepened feeling of desire for the more decisive and general manifestation of the saving power of God. In many

minds this feeling was mixed with discouragement, because of the delay. Others were raised by intelligent and habitual confidence in God above the ebb and flow—the alternation of hope and fear, so common to professors of religion; and amongst the latter was Mr. Shillington. Immediately Daily Union Prayer-meetings were established in the Town Hall, which were held for several weeks without intermission; while in various parts of the country similar means were resorted to on a smaller scale. In connection with these services several persons were brought to the saving knowledge of the truth, even before the overwhelming shower came upon us.

Mr. Shillington took his full share in them, often setting aside the claims of business for the purpose, and usually leading the praises of the assembled worshippers, and assisting to spread their requests before the Hearer of prayer.

On the evening of the eleventh of July, however, the work of God received a great impulse, and from that date progressed with wonderful rapidity and power. A considerable number of persons had quietly assembled in a field adjacent to the town, on the banks of the river Bann, for an open-air service. The day was darkening into twilight, and the chill of approaching night was warning us to separate. A young man from Belfast was, in a very simple and unexciting way, telling of what he had himself seen of the work of God at Ballymena, when the convincing influence of the Divine Spirit seized hold of two persons with great power. Next day there was a marked change in the tone of feeling

throughout the town. Earnest people were inspired with encouragement and confidence; fear took possession of many who were previously unconcerned, and a spirit of solemnity rested upon the entire population.

Somewhat similar services were held each evening during the next fortnight in a field belonging to Mr. Shillington—the very spot where a new chapel was about being erected. It was our custom at the conclusion of our exercises in the open air, to invite any who were under serious impressions into the Wesleyan chapel for special prayer, and it was almost always well filled. On one Sabbath not fewer than forty persons were known to have entered into the liberty of the children of God, and no service was held at which there were not several cases of conversion. Amongst the trophies of Divine grace were many persons of mature, and some even of advanced age, and some who had been notorious transgressors. Those who had not bowed in prayer for years, those who had been habitual drunkards, and those who seldom uttered a sentence without an oath, yielded to the influence of saving grace. Several females also, who had sunk to the lowest point of degradation and wretchedness, were made witnesses of a Saviour's love, and for them suitable employment was secured.

From the town the work soon spread to the surrounding country. The season was a very dry one, and it was our wont not unfrequently to hold the principal part of the service on the week night as well as the Sabbath evening in a field or orchard, retiring

afterwards to some adjacent house to pray with those who might be in distress. Here the local preachers, with Mr. John Shillington at their head, found a congenial field of labour, which they most diligently cultivated. They laboured in most delightful harmony with the Circuit ministers, and associated with them were class and prayer leaders, who formed a numerous company of zealous and successful workers. Many incidents might be given in illustration of the powerful and widespread influence of the Spirit of God upon the people. It was impossible to visit any neighbourhood without hearing testimonies to this effect. Each locality had a history of its own; and, no matter how indisposed persons might be to yield to the power or even to regard the movement with any degree of appreciation, they were constrained to acknowledge its extraordinary and superhuman character, and its blessed results.

An outlying portion of the town known by the name of Corcrain had been long under bad repute, and persevering efforts both by the Wesleyan and the Primitive Methodist churches to lead the people of this district to a concern for salvation had been almost entirely unproductive. Some improvement was, however, beginning to appear when the great awakening took place; and, after a little, a Society of sixty persons was gathered, with a Sunday-school attended by 150 children. These agencies still continue in successful operation in that locality, and a generation is growing up there that is learning to fear and to love God.

Cloncore is the designation by which a country

neighbourhood some four miles from the town is known. Turf bogs stretch for a considerable distance around, and the population is numerous, but at that time was not remarkable for intelligence or propriety of conduct. Quarrels, which often led to violence, were of frequent occurrence; drunkenness and immorality prevailed; and sports were pursued on the Sabbath-day to an extent very unusual in the North of Ireland. But here God poured out His Spirit with wonderful power: a wooden building was erected for public worship and to accommodate the Sabbath-school, and a change took place in the character and habits of the people which is subject of remark to the present day.

The triumphs of divine grace in Ballintaggart were of a most signal character. It was a place which was visited fortnightly on a week-night by the Circuit ministers, and the attendance usually was very small. On one occasion the preacher found to his astonishment about 300 persons, most of whom he had never seen before, gathered in an orchard. A mighty influence rested on the people while the word was preached, and a prayer meeting was held for the benefit of the anxious ones. It continued until ten o'clock, by which time many had found peace; but, as a few were still in great distress, we waited a short time longer in an adjoining house, which was crowded to its utmost capacity. And then began a scene which baffles description. Several who had held out hitherto were completely broken down, and almost all the awakened ones were before midnight enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour. It is worthy of remark

that most of these were persons who had seldom, and some of them never, previously attended Methodist services. The people separated, carrying with them the living fire, and a flame was kindled during the week in various adjacent localities. The Diamond—a spot of historic interest in connection with the Irish rebellion—and many other places soon became centres of soul-saving influence, and meetings for prayer and for Christian fellowship were established on all hands. And some of the evidences afforded as to the character of the work were of the most practical description. The owner of a public-house and his wife were happily converted, and he immediately blotted out his name from the sign-board, determining to be no more the means of ensnaring others. In several instances middle-aged and elderly persons set themselves to learn to read with all the simplicity of little children, that they might be able for themselves to study the Oracles of God.

Statements of this kind might be greatly multiplied and extended. In some cases work was suspended, even in the middle of harvest; not unfrequently as many would be gathered round the doors and windows of a house in which a service was being conducted as there were inside; often meetings were got up without notice when a new case of conviction took place; and in the course of pastoral visitation it was quite usual for the inmates of adjoining houses to flock in, so that one would have the opportunity of addressing several congregations in the course of the day. Then the usual features of a revival of God's work were exhibited in the most distinct manner. Believers

of long standing were greatly quickened; many were led to press after holiness, and became possessed of a joy and power to which they had been strangers previously; while almost all gave themselves to active and self-denying efforts for the salvation of souls.

In this part of Ireland Love-feasts are occasions of very great interest, and the Portadown Love-feast of September, 1859, will long be remembered as a time of glorious power. The weather was beautiful, and the people crowded into town in great numbers. It soon became evident that the chapel would be insufficient to accommodate them, and the large school-room was thrown open. It was at once filled, and the large room in the Town Hall was secured. But even this proved insufficient, and the Court-house was placed at the disposal of a fourth congregation. The services in the two former places were conducted by the ministers of the Circuit, and in the two latter by Mr. John Shillington and the late Mr. Seth Jelly, assisted in each case by other brethren. No approximate statement can be made as to the amount of fruit reaped that day. Our feeling is best described by the words of inspiration, "They joy before thee as with the joy of harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil."

The foregoing has reference exclusively to the territory then included in the Portadown Circuit, and mainly to the Methodist denomination. At the same time a similar work was in progress in surrounding Circuits, and in the several branches of the Church of Christ, not differing from this in any essential particular. Lurgan, Tandragee, and Armagh Circuits

were sharing in the blessed baptism ; and beyond the limits of our county the Lord was also greatly glorified.

The Rev. Robert Huston, who was at that time stationed in the city of Armagh, relates a number of very interesting particulars which came under his own notice. In one case a Sunday-school festival was held at which the addresses were interrupted by the cries of mourners, and a most affecting incident occurred—a little girl threw her arms round her brother's neck, beseeching him to yield his heart to God. The excitement spread, seekers of salvation became very numerous, and ere the close of the meeting several had believed, and were enabled to praise a pardoning God. In another instance a wonderful awakening took place in a day-school, while the ordinary business was going on. At Kinnego, a place "inhabited by a poor and demoralised Protestant population, chiefly weavers," some fifty persons were received into church fellowship. A great united prayer meeting was held in the city of Armagh. Crowds came by excursion trains from various quarters, and it was computed that 15,000 people were present. For more effective operation this large number was divided into eight praying companies, and it is said that in one of them alone twenty-five persons professed to receive the converting grace of God. On one occasion a social meeting for converts and inquirers was held in a tent which had a few days previously been used at the races for the sale of strong drink. This was connected with a barn by a covered passage, and into them were crowded nearly four hundred persons. The ministers and leaders conducted

in these places two prayer meetings simultaneously, and a goodly number were enabled to rejoice in God. These are but a few instances illustrative of what was wrought by the power of the Divine Spirit; and they are recorded here, not as being more striking than many others, but because they are well authenticated, having been witnessed by those who, in narrating them, have carefully abstained from anything of exaggeration.

But possibly some will inquire—"Where is the fruit? Have not many cases of backsliding taken place? Is not the work of God now in a less hopeful condition than it was previous to this visitation?" And, scarcely waiting for a reply, there are those who rush to the conclusion—"Revivals are not an unmixed good; probably the evil preponderates. Reaction soon sets in. The quiet way of promoting religion is the best." Views like these should not be dismissed in a summary manner, nor should those who give expression to them be treated as having no interest in the salvation of souls. They are entitled to respectful consideration and careful reply; nevertheless, there can be little doubt that they are in the main erroneous, and that those who propound them are decidedly mistaken, and are running great risk of sadly hindering the work of God.*

* Lately the writer had an opportunity of hearing an important testimony upon this point. The Rev. H. M. Williamson, Minister of Fisherwick Place Presbyterian Church, Belfast, stated in a united prayer meeting that he had for fifteen years closely observed the character and conduct of a number of persons who had been converted during the revival of 1859, as well as of several who received Christ under unexciting circumstances, and that his judgment was decidedly in favour of the

It must be admitted and deplored that a large discount has to be taken off the immediate and apparent results of most revivals; but unfortunately this is also true in regard to isolated cases of conversion. And it may be well to ask how far in either case this is to be attributed to causes for which the Church of God is plainly accountable. How far, for example, is it due to the prevailing notion that a revived condition cannot be sustained—that there must be the ebb as well as the flow — that it is to be the occasional, perhaps the periodical, but not the normal, experience of God's people? How far is it to be laid at the door of erroneous or defective teaching and imperfect care? Much is expected from young converts, and yet it often happens that they are not welcomed and helped as they ought to be. How far, again, may it be traced to the prevalence of a feeble piety amongst professors of long standing, and especially amongst ministers and office-bearers, and to the consequent acceptance by beginners of a low standard of Christian attainment for themselves? If, when converted, young converts are not brought into a region of vigorous spiritual life, it is almost inevitable that they will sink to the low level of those around them. There can be little doubt that if a large portion of God's people lived in the enjoyment of full salvation, this sad cause of discouragement would be very much abated—that signs of declension would be perceived much sooner, and

former. He believed that they were the most consistent Christians and the most zealous workers. On the same occasion the Rev. Dr. Knox, of Linenhall-street Presbyterian Church, expressed his concurrence with these sentiments.

that in many cases the evil would be checked before the wanderer had gone hopelessly far from the fold. The Church of God cannot afford to depreciate and discourage revivals. Let revivals cease, and its effectiveness will in proportion decline ; but let revivals of the true Pentecostal type be promoted and enjoyed, and the triumphs of the past will appear small in comparison with the glorious successes of the future.

Intimately connected with the narrative of Mr. Shillington's life and with the progress of the work of God in Portadown, and closely related to the period now under notice, is the erection of the spacious premises in Thomas-street, now occupied by the Methodist Church. Reference has already been made to the building of the chapel and minister's residence on the opposite side of the same street. Although the former was a substantial and commodious edifice, it was found defective in several of the requirements now needed by a numerous society and congregation ; and on the writer's appointment to the Circuit in 1857, a scheme for enlarging and improving it was under consideration. It was found, however, that the contemplated alterations would involve a very large outlay, and be at the best but partially satisfactory. The erection of altogether new premises was then proposed ; and it was decided to submit the two projects to a full meeting of members and friends, so as to ascertain the prevailing opinion. Very soon after, a large congregational tea meeting was held, the verdict of which was unmistakably in favour of the latter course. A subscription list was then opened, which was headed by a handsome contribution from Mr. Shillington and

family, and before the termination of the meeting upwards of two thousand pounds was promised.

The preparatory stages were soon passed through; and, while God was pouring out His Spirit and building the spiritual house, a spacious and attractive sanctuary was rising for the accommodation of worshippers who were soon to fill it with songs of praise.

At its commencement there was not any elaborate ceremonial—no formal stone-laying, no silver trowel, no public banquet, no complimentary speech-making. How far these things are good or evil it is not now proposed to consider. The fact is recorded chiefly as illustrating the simplicity and humility of our departed friend. If any parade had been indulged in, he would have been the prominent figure; and the usual course was departed from chiefly in deference to his wish. A special religious service was held upon the ground, to implore the divine blessing upon the undertaking. Several addresses were delivered—some bringing up the history of the past, with its lessons of gratitude and responsibility; some directing to the fields "white unto harvest" around us, and giving blessed assurance of our continued enjoyment of God's presence and help; and some anticipating a yet brighter future, and leading us to hope that the "glory of the latter house" would exceed the glory of those by which it was preceded. Several prayers were offered, by which we were brought very near to God; and the sweet songs of Zion, led by the voice of our departed brother tremulous with emotion, seemed to bear us heavenward as on eagles' wings.

The enterprise thus auspiciously commenced seemed

to secure divine favour and guidance throughout. Week by week the building committee, of which Mr. Shillington was a prominent member, met to transact the necessary business ; and thus the accumulation of arrears was avoided, while a delightful harmony marked its proceedings. In the autumn of 1861 everything was complete ; and an elegant chapel, a noble school-room, with vestry, class-rooms and leader's room adjoining, and a minister's residence, far in advance of anything known amongst us at the time, were ready for occupation.

Mr. Shillington was a joyful sharer in the opening services of this house of prayer ; and, although his previous gifts had been so large, a liberal contributor in connection with them. An excellent taste marked the arrangements. The mingling of English and Irish ministers, and of those who had been connected with the Circuit with strangers, was very gratifying to all. At seven o'clock in the morning of the 18th October, Mr. Shillington conducted a preparatory prayer meeting in the new building, when he read the 84th Psalm with a significant expressiveness. The Rev. Thomas Llewellyn, then of Manchester, preached at mid-day and in the evening to overflowing congregations. On the following Sabbath morning a sermon, which was truly described as "masterly and brilliant," was delivered by the eloquent and now venerable Rev. James B. Gillman ; and in the evening the pulpit was occupied by the writer. The Revs. Dr. Crook, William Hoey, J. J. Landers, William Arthur, M.A., and Dr. Cather followed with the remaining services. The financial

results were very encouraging, the collections reaching the large sum of £460. The total expenditure exceeded £5,000, and after a short time the premises were left free of debt. Frequently Mr. Shillington said respecting it: "It cannot be truly called the Lord's house while any debt remains upon it."

Since that period Portadown has had its vicissitudes, and of these the Methodist portion of the community has had to bear its share. But with trials have been mingled many mercies. At times considerable spiritual prosperity has been enjoyed. This was particularly the case on the occasion of the visit of Dr. Palmer and his devoted and useful wife, the late Mrs. Phœbe Palmer, in the year 1862; but the fear of unduly extending our narrative obliges us to omit details.

IX.

HOME LIFE.

TO persons of reasonable requirements Tavanagh House would appear to be the model of a comfortable home. Exceeded by many in size and in magnificence, it is surpassed by none in convenience or in taste. Built by the elder Mr. Shillington just on the confines of the town, and surrounded by pleasure-grounds and gardens, that excellent man probably expected to spend there a long and happy old age. But it was differently determined by One who never errs. He died soon after its erection, and the subject of our memoir came into possession of it. And it could not have fallen into better hands. For upwards of forty years this spot has been a centre of attraction, where intelligent and cheerful piety has been combined with, and diffused by, a generous Christian hospitality. The family residing there had a united head. It would be difficult to say whether the husband and father or his invaluable "helpmeet" filled with greater efficiency the posts assigned them by an Allwise Providence; and as children grew up, "like olive-plants round about their table," and one by one became the subjects of the saving grace of God, they fell in with their parents' plans for doing good, and no element was wanting to constitute it a truly happy home. The multiplication of such homes is a matter of primary interest. The family and social

life of these lands is not merely a national characteristic, but is also a constituent part of our national strength; and where we find it in its best development, at once bright and pure, joyous and serious, we would do well to study it, and to endeavour to reproduce it in our own circles. The hope of promoting so desirable an object must be our apology for lifting the veil of privacy, and affording to any who choose to look a glimpse of the inner life of a group to whom it was given to realize a large amount of domestic enjoyment.

Even a casual visitor could not fail to perceive that in this household order reigned, and this contributed in no small degree to the desired result. There was a place for every person, a time for every duty, and an occupation for every moment. In consequence of this completeness of arrangement a strangely pleasant feeling of leisure at all times prevailed. There was no crowding of pursuits, no hurrying in the vain attempt to overtake lost time, no pitiful mourning over business left undone. A plan carefully laid and punctually carried out gave to each day's proceedings an air of regularity and ease which greatly tended to general satisfaction. Usually in winter breakfast was commenced before the day had dawned, and was concluded before the gas-lights could be dispensed with. Hence Mr. Shillington was accustomed to say to his daughters, "Well, girls, whatever I have failed to do for you, I have given you a good breakfast education at all events."

Another striking and most agreeable feature was the perfect freedom which uniformly prevailed. Pain-

ful restraint was unknown; every one seemed to be completely "at home." The language and manner of the young people towards their parents was marked by due respect, but was confiding and familiar; while it was plain that on the other hand the parents had entire control over their children. Liberty did not reign at the expense of law, nor did law infringe upon liberty. The familiarity and the authority were alike pervaded by love. And the spirit was infectious. Those who had the privilege of being guests in that pleasant dwelling seemed to inhale it with the very air they breathed. Whether one dropped in unexpectedly, or was associated with a numerous company on some special occasion, the same charming influence soon made itself to be felt, and compelled each present to the experience of a quiet but real enjoyment.

The hospitalities of Tavanagh House were very abundant. Never was the apostolic precept more literally obeyed: "Use hospitality without grudging." It was chiefly, though not exclusively such as grew out of the relation of the family to the Church of God. It was Mr. Shillington's custom during a lengthened period twice in the year to entertain at dinner the Stewards of the various Circuits connected with the District, in conjunction with other friends; and some of the most agreeable recollections of ministers who have been stationed in that neighbourhood are associated with occasions when the members of the District Meeting were gathered together under this friendly roof for breakfast. Then on Missionary Anniversary occasions, and at other times of special interest, it was pretty well known where the most

attractive influence would be found; and in very many cases those who have had wide and varied experience of this kind have spoken of the unalloyed pleasure imparted, and the deep impression made, by even one visit of this description. What then may be said by those who have enjoyed this privilege with unvarying regularity during a series of years?

To the pleasure and profit of such occasions Mr. Shillington himself contributed in no small degree. He possessed "the frankness that spreads ease and animation around it; and the eye that speaks affability to all, that chases timidity from every bosom, that tells every man in the company to be confident and happy," which Dr. Chalmers declares to be the very "heart of social intercourse." His guests were ever greeted with a cordial welcome, and embarrassment or restraint were made impossible. And the conversation was so guided that mental and spiritual improvement could scarcely fail to result. It is narrated of Handel that, when congratulated on having "entertained" a distinguished company with the oratorio of the "Messiah," he replied, "My Lord, I should be sorry if I only entertained them; I wish to make them better." So it appeared to be Mr. Shillington's aim at his own table and fireside to promote general edification. And this he did in the most agreeable way, talking so as to draw out others.

> "In his words
> There was an athletic sinew."

Sometimes he would sustain an argument on an important topic with great vigour. Sometimes he would very effectively narrate an incident, and he thoroughly

enjoyed a good story told by another. His spirit was very genial; but he was not so much humorous or witty himself as that he relished these qualities in others when they were kept within proper limits. He was no jester. He not only knew how to say the right thing at the right time, but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment. Anything of mere levity or of indecorum he at once detected; and, instead of being greeted with the hearty laugh which innocent pleasantry drew forth, it was sure to be met with silence, or with a brief and emphatic expression of disapproval. Leaving his house one ever had the feeling that there was nothing there to lower the tone of spirituality or to induce indisposition to prayer, while there was much to call forth gratitude and lead to renewed consecration to God. The following sentences in a letter written by one who knew him well, give a correct view of the impression received from intercourse with him in his own abode: "He must have had a large amount of enjoyment in his life. The warm-hearted zest with which he entered into everything, and the keen relish he had for any bright or pleasant *repartee* or any brilliant or powerful passage in a book he had been reading, gave quite a sunny character to his spirit, lighting up with gladness all around him. To me, coming in various ways into associations that were sombre enough, his genial, jubilant good-humour and joyousness were very welcome. It was, however, at his hospitable table that he appeared to greatest advantage. Here he completely unbent the bow, and discussed all sorts of problems in the freest manner."

Family worship was a most interesting and profitable exercise in this dwelling. It was conducted in the morning after breakfast, and in the evening after tea; and the selection of these hours placed it in a position of recognized and primary importance, and secured for it the largest amount of attention. Children and servants were uniformly present, and formed a pretty numerous company. It was the custom to sing the hymns in the Wesleyan Hymn Book in order, and to read the Scriptures consecutively. This practice gave a connectedness to these engagements which added to their interest and enhanced their value. The impression made on the mind of one who was for some time a visitor at Tavanagh, and who was very competent to form an opinion, is given in the following terms:—"But it was in his manner of conducting family worship that the deepest impression was made upon me. He read the Scriptures regularly through, and the Epistle to the Hebrews was the portion for that week. The reverent joy and the deep devotion with which he read "the Word," and the intense interest with which he followed the great argument of this marvellous and masterly epistle, I could never forget; nor was I ever after at any loss to know how deep and firm was the foundation, and how lofty the superstructure of God's temple in the soul of His servant."

Mr. Shillington's bearing towards the members of his family was productive of the happiest results, binding all together in a common and loving bond. He was habitually cheerful, and in the home circle he seemed to forget the cares inseparable from business

engagements and public life. He was dignified but not austere, familiar but not lax; he was happily free from the eccentricity or caprice by which so many otherwise excellent characters are marred. He was felt by all to be the most important individual in the circle, yet there was a marked absence of self-importance; he secured for his position the most complete respect, yet none of his household felt towards him anything akin to fear. He liked prompt obedience, and every one seemed to be rejoiced to render it. He never issued orders to his children, yet they appeared instinctively to understand his wishes, and could tell at a glance when he was satisfied. He did not pry curiously into their affairs, and yet—to use the words of one of his daughters—they "never thought of not telling him everything." He avoided the fault of fault-finding—that fruitful source of domestic discomfort. Indeed it can scarcely be said that he avoided it; he seemed to have no inclination towards it; he was willing to be pleased, and every one was desirous to please him.

As his sons and daughters grew up he made them to a great extent his companions. He was not what is usually understood by a "student;" but he was an intelligent and well-read man, and he took care that they should be abundantly supplied with interesting and instructive reading. Some valuable work was usually on hand, and was read aloud in the family circle, thus furnishing improving topics for conversation. By these means in the course of years numerous volumes of biography and history, as well as many books relating to travel and discovery, and some on

various branches of science, were studied and discussed with no small advantage. In a sketch of his life, published in a local journal, it was truly said, "He carefully cultivated a naturally fine literary taste, and was intimately acquainted with the literature of his time and age;" and further, "It was within his pleasant and joyous home, where sorrow was rarely permitted to intrude, that he was most loved and truly appreciated. Outside some word or action might be misunderstood; but within this sacred enclosure he was loved with a fond and enduring love, and was at once the joy and the pride of every member of the family."

But it is best to make Mr. Shillington as much as possible the exponent of his own home life, and this can be done to some extent by supplying extracts from letters which he wrote to members of his family, either when they happened to be at a distance, or when he himself was away from home. They extend over a considerable period of time, and give some idea of his mode of dealing with his children at different ages and in various circumstances.

In a previous chapter, some extracts from letters to his eldest son were given, as exhibiting his own religious character and views. Others may now be added which refer to more general subjects.

In one we find him encouraging freedom of communication in the following terms:—"Mamma has been very busy this week, or she would have written to you herself; but she expects that you will soon write to her. Write soon, if it should be only two or three lines, to say how you are, how you like the school, and if you are able to get your lessons well. I

hope you recommend yourself to your governor and masters by obedience, diligence, and attention, to the servants by respect and civility, and to your schoolfellows by kindness and good temper."

A little later he writes about his son's studies and general reading. He says, "I wish to hear what books you are reading, and what your lessons are upon the particular days; how much time you devote to English, and how much to Latin and French, and whether or not you like Latin and French, and anything else you can think about yourself, as the most trifling thing you can tell me of yourself will be interesting to me." Again he writes, "I am glad you are fond of your Bible. It is the Word of God, and is able to make you wise unto salvation by faith which is in Christ Jesus. Try, while you read, to understand it; and pray earnestly to God that He may make His light to shine upon it, and bless the reading of it to the informing of your judgment and the improvement of your heart." One more paragraph may be given upon this point: "I am sorry I did not know before the condition on which you could have the use of the library. I would wish you by all means to contribute to its catalogue a book such as Mr. McLean would approve of; and let me know what books belonging to it you read."

Nor did he, in advising his son and preparing him for life, deal merely in general counsels. The following will supply samples of the minute details bearing upon his educational progress into which he sometimes went. He says, in one of his letters, "I am quite pleased to find that you are not likely to be dis-

couraged by my pointing out the errors in your writing and spelling. A little trouble will soon overcome them ; and it is well worth it, as, no matter how clever a man may be in other respects, he will always be thought the less of for not being able to spell his words correctly." He then proceeds most carefully to distinguish between words that are the same in pronunciation, but different in orthography and in signification, adding, "A little attention will soon rectify these mistakes, and I am sure you will not be discouraged by my pointing them out to you."

In money matters his plan was to give to his children a considerable discretion, even at a very early age. He instilled into their minds right views, especially as to the importance of generously sustaining the work of God, and then left them pretty much at liberty as to their practical application. He writes to his son, on one occasion, "When you write, let me know how much money you have ; and if you want any more, I shall send it. You will not forget to pay quarterage and class money." A short time after, referring to some matters which he had written home for, he writes, "You can get what you require at Sheffield, where they are to be had easily. Pay for them out of your own money ; and when it becomes exhausted, I shall cheerfully replenish your stock." And again, "I do not wish to confine you in what you would like to give at the collections. Give what you think yourself would be right, and when I see you I will tell you whether I think it too much or too little ; only I would like you to remember that it is better to give money to charitable purposes than to waste even

a smaller amount on needless self-indulgences." In another letter he says, "I observe you have got your new organ opened. I am glad to find by your letter to your mamma, that you were not an inattentive hearer of the discourses delivered. What did you give at the collection? You know I would not like you to be backward in contributing upon such occasions."

He gives, in a few beautiful words, his feelings in regard to home life, and his own home in particular, in a letter written when the Christmas holidays were approaching. It had been arranged that his son should spend them with friends in Newark-on-Trent, and he writes with the view of reconciling his mind to the plan. He says, "I am very sure that uncle, aunt, and cousins will do all they can to make your visit pleasant. If we be all spared to see another Christmas, you will be older, and more accustomed to travelling, so as to be able to undertake the journey in the winter season. A few months more will bring round the midsummer holidays, and then we all hope to have the pleasure of meeting at home; and I trust the long absence will only serve to make us all think the more of each other when we meet, and of home itself—the happiest place of meeting."

A few years later he wrote at considerable length, under somewhat similar circumstances, to his eldest daughter upon Christmas Day. He refers to books which he had sent for her to read during the vacation, states that all the family attended the morning service at six o'clock in the chapel, describes the performance of the Christmas anthem by the choir, and gives the names of those who took the several parts,

recites the text, and refers briefly to the sermon, and then passes on to mention various friends and their movements, and makes several inquiries. He thus concludes: "Above everything, mind the state of your spiritual health. Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to this, be diligent in reading, in meditation, in prayer; be watchful over your own heart; beware of the temptations of the enemy, and the allurements of the world." By means such as these the connection with home was maintained, and the attachment of his children to it strengthened; and this frequent and affectionate correspondence was also instrumental in imparting and cherishing a gracious religious influence.

On one occasion, when recovering from severe affliction, the children of the family presented to their beloved parents a handsome copy of the sacred Scriptures for family use, and the gift was acknowledged in the following touching letter:—

"VERY DEAR CHILDREN,

"YOUR beautiful present has taken us both by surprise, and is very acceptable to us, not so much for its pecuniary value, as the consideration that it was your own high estimate of the Divine Word which prompted you to adopt it as an expression of your affectionate regard to us who love you tenderly, and live for your happiness.

"This valuable token of your gratitude appears to us very seasonable just now, when we have met this morning for the first time around the breakfast table,

after a temporary separation occasioned by the dangerous illness of five of you.

"We unitedly thank you for this manifestation of filial love, and pray that the gracious God who has fed us all our lives long, and blessed our happy union unto this day, may continue His goodness to us, 'redeem you from all evil,' and bless you all 'with blessings of heaven above, and of the deep that lieth under,' and that we all, walking by the light of the Truth and Spirit of God, may be guided in the way of peace, and found at last,

"'No wanderer lost, *a family* in heaven.'

"We are, very dear Children,

"Your affectionate Parents,

"THOS. A. AND ELIZTH. SHILLINGTON."

Here may be recorded an incident which shows that, while Mr. Shillington was deeply impressed with the importance of spiritual things, and anxious for the salvation of his children, he did not believe in long-faced piety, but could enjoy and even originate a little harmless fun, combining pleasantly with it a good practical lesson. One of his daughters had lost her purse on the occasion of a visit to Belfast, and was rather disconcerted thereby. In a day or two she received the following epistle, of which, as may be guessed, her father was the writer:—

"PICKPOCKET CLUB,
"CUTPURSE CORNER, BELFAST.

"MADAM,

"YOU would no doubt be surprised when you found this morning that you had lost your purse and

contents. But perhaps you will be equally surprised, if not more so, now to be informed that our committee felt so dissatisfied with my want of success in not securing your watch as well, that they have obliged me to return you the two pounds or thereabouts which were in your purse at the time I took it, which I now do by post. Hoping my next effort at acquaintance with you may be more advantageous to me,

"I am, Madam,
"Yours respectfully,
"LAURENCE LIGHTFINGERS."

We now proceed to give a few specimens of Mr. Shillington's letters written on occasions when he was temporarily absent from home. These absences did not frequently occur. Home was his loved retreat, and he usually arranged his numerous journeys on business so as to complete them within the day. His annual visit to the Conference town, with which was sometimes combined a run to some place of interest in the vicinity; a sojourn for a few weeks in summer at the seaside now and again, or a trip to England, where he had many valued friends, he greatly enjoyed. But he ever returned to the family circle with thankfulness and delight. It was his custom when away to write home daily, and he expected as frequently to hear from those who were left behind. Nor were his epistles merely brief statements as to his movements, or directions respecting business affairs; they were full of loving words, and frequently contained descriptions of the places which

he visited, and of the persons whom he met. He sought to share with those to whom he wrote the pleasure which he experienced himself. Many pages could be filled with communications of this kind. A few only are given, as furnishing examples of his constant custom, as illustrating the strength and tenderness of his domestic attachments, and as showing the way by which he fostered similar feelings in his children.

One summer, during which he spent some time at Newcastle, County Down, he wrote to two of his daughters who remained at home:—"You seem to have had a full share of the lightning, and more of the thunder, on Monday, than we had here. The lightning was truly grand. The whole bay was one flash of light, and the effect upon the water was really amazing. What must He be who holds this mighty engine under His control and the winds in His fists!

'This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our Love!'

What an unspeakable blessing to have Him for a Friend and Father! May we ever cleave to Him!"

In another letter he gives them a stirring description of the adventures of a party which accomplished the ascent of Slieve Donard. There is likewise one detailing somewhat minutely the doings of a picnic party in Tollymore Park. The narrative is so homely and lifelike, we subjoin the greater part of it.

"My dear Girls,

"I wrote Nora a short note yesterday morning, and now sit down before the rest are stirring to

give you a brief account of our proceedings after I posted my letter.

"We had our car, William John's, and Uncle Johnston's quite full, as you may suppose when I tell you that we had all our respective households packed upon them. We drove along towards the mountain, and before we knew had got a long way up. The road was very good, but the hill was steep, and the horses got very warm although we only walked them. At length we reached a place where four ways met, and we got off the cars, pulled out a small basket containing biscuits and some fruit, and took a stroll. We then all remounted, and drove to the nearest point, to the dining-room fitted up by Lord Roden for the accommodation of visitors. When we got there we found a carriage stopped, and a party preoccupying the place; so we selected a very nice grass plot most beautifully enclosed, with high trees all round and our road skirting one side. We then had a short walk, leaving Lizzie and Sarah to spread our table, and on returning found all ready. We had the cushions of the cars, with the rugs and cloaks, for seats, and commenced operations. We had fowls and ducks, ham and tongue, apple-pie and custard. One large basket held most of the eatables; it fits as nicely into the well of our car as if it had been made for it. We enjoyed our spread very much. The day was most beautiful—serene and calm, with just enough of sun to make it pleasant and cheerful, without dazzling with its splendour or scorching with its heat.

"After our 'refection,' we set out for a walk along the river, and very much admired the way in which

the grounds are laid out, and the curious iron and swing bridges which are thrown across the torrent, and which lead to walks along the banks on either side. We then drove homeward by the 'Barbican' gate, got to our domicile about six o'clock, and the whole party assembled in our drawing-room for tea at seven.

"I trust to see you all well to-morrow.

"Love to all friends from

"Your affectionate Father,

"THOS. A. SHILLINGTON."

Later we have a number of letters written from the south of Ireland. Some of the descriptions given of Queenstown, Killarney, and other places, are really fine; while they are at the same time so circumstantial as to give to his correspondents a very distinct impression of the scenes and events through which he was passing. The following letter is addressed to the wife of his eldest son. He was very much attached to her, and was accustomed sometimes to call her his "sixth daughter," and at others his "youngest daughter," as being for many years the last introduced into his family.

He writes from Killarney:—

"MY EVER DEAR MARY JANE,

"IT is one of the drawbacks of my lengthened absence from home that I am cut off from a look in upon you and the dear children; and I must now, in order to alleviate the evil as much as possible, have a little talk with you by letter as the best substitute for personal intercourse.

"You will have heard of our doings so far by the letters sent home, up to yesterday morning. We had a most beautiful day for the Gap of Dunloe and down the entire length of the lakes. We drove in a two-horse four-wheeled car about twelve miles; then, when the car could go no further, we walked by a good bridle road up to the top of the Gap, perhaps two miles. The ascent was steep, but the air was invigorating and the weather fine. For a minute or two the rain would threaten, but presently it would pass over and we were 'all serene' again. Then at every turn of the path we would stop to hear our bugler who accompanied us, and was in fact our professional guide. And the echoes through the mountains were most astonishing. The girls say they could have stood listening to them with delight all the day, and forgetting the distance they had to go. Then at some particular places small cannon were placed, which were fired off by the persons in charge of them for our amusement and their profit. The reports of the small ordnance were very good, and the echoes were multiplied and rolled amongst the hills until you would really imagine it more like thunder than anything else. If the report of a tiny gun about two feet long be so great, what must thunder itself be in such a place! It must appear as the voice of God Himself, and strike awe and terror into any who have a sense of His majesty and power. The ever-changing views as you pass through the defile of the mountain are very interesting and beautiful. On our way down from the Gap to the Lakes the scenery is still fine and varied, but of an entirely different character from that

through the defile—more extended and diversified. We turned off from the bridle road to save time, and to have a fine panoramic view of the country; and after a walk of about five miles in all, got to our boat, which was waiting for us at the head of the Lakes. We embarked and came down a short distance, when we landed and had our luncheon; and after doing justice to it, as you may suppose we were prepared to do, we re-embarked, and got down to our hotel at seven o'clock. After tea our entire party walked into the town and back, about four miles more.

"This morning is wet, and there is little prospect of seeing much to-day, so we must make the best of our circumstances. Remember me most affectionately to all with you and at Tavanagh, as well as to other friends who may inquire for

"Your affectionate Father,

"THOS. A. SHILLINGTON."

The following, addressed to one of his daughters, contains an account of a missionary anniversary meeting in Exeter Hall.

"MY DEAR ELEANORA,

"IT is quite time I should acknowledge to yourself the receipt of your acceptable and welcome letter. I am afraid I have but imperfectly and without order given an account of my proceedings and my pleasures since I arrived here, and I so imperfectly recollect what I did write that it would be useless to go back upon it.

"Yesterday's meeting was glorious. We got to

Exeter Hall at ten precisely. Mr. M—— obtained seats for Mrs. M—— and Lizzie in the side gallery, on the Chairman's right hand; and for Miss L——, Marion, and myself in the front of the platform just adjoining. The hall was more than three-fourths full when we arrived, and soon became *packed.* After the preliminary religious exercises Mr. Lycett took the chair, and made an excellent speech, which gave a tone to the whole meeting. The Report was not *very* long, and the speeches commenced just an hour after the meeting was opened. Mr. Etheridge moved the adoption of the Report. His voice was feeble, and he was not heard well; but the auditory, out of respect for him, was very patient and tolerant until nearly the close. Mr. Scott, of Sweden, made an excellent and interesting speech. Afterwards Mr. Shaw spoke, and he was followed by Mr. Bedford. Mr. Walton made the speech of the day; it was very brilliant and telling, and carried the entire meeting with it. Mr. Punshon spoke for twenty-five minutes, captivating the whole audience, and quoting our friend Mr. Armstrong, "Has he *fire?*" I must not omit to tell you that the Committee requested me to support a resolution, which I did.

"After the meeting I dined, by invitation of Mr. Heald, the Treasurer, with a large company of ministers and laymen at the Albion Hotel. The party was a very agreeable one.

"I omitted to mention that Bishop Janes, from America, came in during the introductory part of the meeting, and was very cordially received. He afterwards dined with us.

"To-day, I believe, we are for Hampton Court.

"Love to all from your affectionate father,

"THOS. A. SHILLINGTON."

The last epistle of this description which will be given exhibits in its closing paragraph the fidelity with which Mr. Shillington attended to his engagements in connection with the Church of God, taking care that they were not neglected during his absence. It was written from Portrush.

"MY DEAR MARION,

"I HOPE it will not be unacceptable to you to have a line from me to say how we are getting on. Well, after breakfast mamma and I ventured upon a stroll towards Ramoan Hill, and with a little management and due deliberation mamma was enabled to make the circuit of it, which surprised us not a little. She then took a seat in the hotel grounds, while the girls and I had two games of croquet, after which we had luncheon. About four o'clock the girls and I walked over to Portstewart, where we had tea at Mrs. A——'s, returning home a little after seven. Mamma is surprisingly better, and we hope to make the Causeway to-morrow in her company.

"You will give our united love to Thomas, Mary Jane, and the dear children, as well as to any others who may inquire for us. Tell Thomas to see that my Class is supplied on Sunday morning. Mr. B—— is to take charge of the afternoon meeting.

"Your affectionate father,

"THOS. A. SHILLINGTON."

With two other letters we close this chapter. They possess peculiar interest. One of them was written to his grandson, then a very little boy; and the other, nearly two years later, to a grand-daughter, who was still younger. The Rev. Thomas Binney writes, "I am fond of children. I think them the poetry of the world, the fresh flowers of our hearths and homes; little conjurors, who with their natural magic evoke what delights and enriches all ranks, and tends to equalize the different classes of society." Mr. Shillington took peculiar pleasure in these

"Gay, guileless, sportive, lovely little things;"

and it was beautiful to see how a man of fine intellect and venerable years could become as a little child in simplicity and tenderness. Some one who was present on one occasion when he was playing with one of his grandchildren made the remark that people are generally fonder of their grandchildren than of their children. "No," he quickly replied, "not fonder, only more indulgent." It will be observed that these little people were from home on the occasions when the letters were written.

"My own Grandson,

"I feel the place so strange without you that I think of writing you a few lines to keep up our communication, although this mode of correspondence is not so agreeable as to look each other in the face, and to have an occasional kiss into the bargain.

"You remember the walk you and I had last Saturday, when we went to the fields and climbed the gate

to see Tom Brown and Footstick with the other horses. I went with papa this evening again to see them, and they looked very well; only the weather is cold, and they did not seem to like it.

"I think sister feels very lonely without you. Nurse has been very careful of her since mamma left, as she was rather poorly; but she is now much better.

"We expect Aunts Marion and Nora home from Coleraine to-morrow evening. Aunt Tiff talks a great deal about you, and will be very glad to see you when you return.

"I hope you are enjoying yourself much with your kind friends at Magherafelt, and that mamma and grandmamma are quite well. You will give my kindest remembrances to them, and to your uncles, aunts, and cousins.

"Hoping that you are a good boy—obedient and dutiful to your mamma, and kind and obliging to your friends, and to see you safe home when your visit is ended,

"I am, my own grandson,

"Your affectionate grandpapa,

"THOS. A. SHILLINGTON."

"MY VERY DEAR GRAND-DAUGHTER,

"As I have been writing a letter to papa about business, I think you will not be displeased at getting a small note from grandpapa.

"Grandmamma has got a second flock of young ducks, and a second one of goslings; and to-day she has had an addition of twenty-seven young turkeys, so that the great Goliath has a numerous family.

Cushendall, the pony, has got very fat and looks very well; and you may tell Habo that Tom Brown and Footstick are very much improved. They are beginning to look sleek and fat, and take great play out of themselves, and stand to be fondled. I have not seen Billy or Nettle since you left, as I don't much care for them, and think they care about as little for me.

"If you soon come home, grandmamma would let you help to feed the young turkeys. If you or Habo would write me a letter I should be glad to see it.

"Your affectionate grandpapa,

"THOS. A. SHILLINGTON."

Jonathan Edwards has said that "Every Christian family ought to be, as it were, a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by His rules." And this was aimed at, and to no small extent realised, in the family circle at Tavanagh House. Christian order, cheerful piety, constant activity, mutual love, and practical benevolence, uniformly distinguished it; and from it, as a centre, rays of light, and love, and joy, were continually penetrating other homes, and gladdening other hearts. While he was nobly supported by a worthy wife and devoted children, this must be largely attributed to the religious influence and genuine good sense of the subject of this memoir.

X.

BEREAVEMENT.

FEW homes had been so free from sorrow as the one sketched in the previous chapter. Almost literally through a series of years had the promise been fulfilled: "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." Serious sickness had been but seldom permitted to intrude; and death but twice, when two infant sons were taken to an early rest. Now, however, the cloud gathered in dense darkness. Well was it for the members of this family that they had sought and found the salvation of the Gospel when the sky was clear, and the storm had not begun to rise. They were now prepared to avail themselves of the shelter and support of Omnipotent love.

> "Though tempest frowns,
> Though nature shakes, how sweet to lean on Heaven!
> To lean on Him on whom archangels lean!"

"Lay your *sins* on Christ," says Hewitson, "as a sacrifice; and lay your *trials* on Him as a kind and sympathising Friend." Opportunity to do this is given at some time or other to all; and the blessedness enjoyed in the exercise makes amends for the suffering and the pain, just as the rainbow spanning the arch of heaven makes us by its brightness forget

the drenching rain without which it could not have been produced. But the particular circumstances of divine discipline, and the exact time when it will be administered, are not usually made known to us. It has been well said that "the veil which covers the face of futurity is woven by the hand of mercy." Thus we are saved from suffering beforehand, which would greatly aggravate our sorrow.

The early life of Mrs. Shillington has already been noticed, and the years that followed fulfilled the promise of a consecrated youth. As a devoted wife and mother she had few equals, and she especially excelled in this that she was *wise* as well as fond. Affection never seemed to influence her so as to interfere with the exercise of a sound judgment; and yet her love to husband and children, and to a wide and ever-extending circle of friends, could not be doubted. With many Christian women around her in whom the grace of God shone with much attractiveness, she nevertheless had accorded to her by common consent a decided pre-eminence; and this became still more marked as years gave increased weight to her experience, causing her to be regarded by all with affectionate respect.

Her domestic life had been of the happiest kind; and now in mellow age the union subsisting between her much-loved husband and herself seemed to be closer than ever. The idea suggested by John Foster is very beautiful, that friendship should become more tender the older persons become, just as two trees, planted near each other, intermingle their branches and foliage more completely the higher they grow and the more widely they spread. Thus it should

ever be in matrimonial life, and thus it was in the present case. It was lovely to observe, so far as could be done without intrusion, the strength and freshness of their mutual affection. Mr. Shillington seemed as though he would say to his beloved partner as Milton represents Adam as saying to Eve—

> "I, from the influence of thy looks, receive
> Access in every virtue; in thy sight
> More wise, more watchful, stronger."

She was indeed "an helpmeet." "The heart of her husband safely trusted in her;" "She did him good, and not evil, all the days of her life."

By her children she was sincerely respected and most tenderly loved; and now they revere her memory as a sacred thing, while they themselves remain as monuments of her sagacious and pious skill in training them for the service of God, and for usefulness to others. This is one of the noblest tasks that can be committed to human hands. Happy the parents—happy the mothers especially—who see such results as gladdened her heart! She did not take a very prominent position in the more active engagements of the Church of God, taste and duty appearing to combine in indicating the retirement of domestic life as being her allotted path; but as a member of the Dorcas Association, she rendered valuable assistance from year to year, and she cheered those who were employed in other departments of labour by her well-timed words of encouragement. The poor enjoyed a very large amount of her consideration, and there was a peculiar thoughtfulness in her mode of

administering to their necessities which greatly enhanced the value of her gifts. This received remarkable illustration just previous to her death. It was her custom to send relief weekly to a few of the deserving and needy, and this she was in the habit of attending to herself. On the Friday preceding her decease, though then in extreme feebleness, she desired that this should not be forgotten, and that something additional should be sent as Christmas was so near.

But now, the fruit being ripe, the Lord of the vineyard saw fit to gather it. All through her days she had maintained a consistent profession of religion, but was uniformly quiet and unpretending. The deepened piety of her latter years was manifested in the exclusively religious character of her reading, especially by her increased attachment to the word of God, which became her constant companion, and by the large portion of her time which she spent in private devotion. The calm close of her earthly course cannot be better described than by giving the account of it prepared by her eldest daughter:—

"On December 9th, 1870, my mother returned home with some members of her family, after a few weeks' absence, slightly ailing and somewhat fatigued. No thought of serious illness was then apprehended, and it was only at the solicitation of others that she consented to use remedies. In a few days she became worse, and it was evident that congestion of the lungs was making rapid progress. Twice she seemed to succumb to the disease, and twice she rallied. Hopes of her recovery

were entertained; but nature became exhausted, and she sank.

"Throughout her illness her mind was perfectly clear, and its tone was that of calm serenity approaching to cheerfulness. She frequently expressed the satisfaction which she felt in the atonement, her resignation to the divine will, and her grateful appreciation of the sympathy and attention of friends. On Saturday the 17th, when the disease seemed at the worst, and her family was gathered round her, one of her daughters, holding her hand in hers, said, 'Mamma, we would like to keep you here.' 'I know you would,' she feebly replied. 'But God's love is stronger than ours.' 'Yes, *stronger than death itself*,' was her answer. After some time the words of the Psalmist were repeated. 'For this God is our God for ever and ever;' and she added, giving such emphasis to the last words as indicated her knowledge that the period of departure was approaching, 'He will be our guide—*even unto death*.' The same day, being asked if she felt tired, her reply was given in the words of the hymn,

> 'While Thou art intimately nigh,
> *Who, who shall violate my rest?*
> Sin, earth, and hell I now defy;
> *I lean upon my Saviour's breast.*'

Some allusion having been made to the suffering of the previous day, the line was quoted:—

> 'In suffering be Thy love my peace,'

when she added the remainder of the verse, repeating with much feeling the last clause:—

'In weakness be Thy love my power;
And when the storms of life shall cease,
Jesus, in that important hour,
In death as life be Thou my Guide
And save me, *who for me hast died.*'

Towards the afternoon she rallied considerably, and even became animated in her conversation. On my father referring to the happiness of their past life, and to the possibility of their separation, she said cheerily, 'Well, dear, we shall meet in a better country—*a better country*. Let us encourage ourselves. This is not a time for faith to be in dull exercise.' In the evening her reply to her physician's inquiry was, 'I am just in the balance.' 'But,' said one of her daughters, 'you are not anxious about it, mamma.' 'No,' she answered, 'and I am not going to be anxious. I shall recover if it is the Lord's will, and if not, I won't.' "

Early next morning she asked about her husband, and her daughter remarked that she thought her father had been soothed by their conversation the previous day. "Well, dear," she said, "I meant it to be exhilarating. It is not for us to impugn Providence with the charge of being unkind after so many years of uninterrupted health and prosperity." Until almost the close of the week she continued better; but, being very weak, could not converse much. On one occasion she said to one of her brothers-in-law, "Averell, this affliction has been a great trial to me; but I am leaving myself in the hands of the Lord for life or for death—for time or for eternity—*for time or for eternity*." On his remarking, "Every moment,

Lord, we need the merits of Thy death;" she responded, "Every moment." "And," said he, "it is our privilege also to say, every moment, Lord, we *have* the merits of Thy death." She emphatically replied, "Every moment; without Him I can do nothing." "But," said he, "with Him you can do all things." "But with Him," she responded, "*I am trying* to do all things."

"On Sunday the 25th, she was weaker, and it was manifest to those who watched with her, that her strength was failing. She continued to sink through the following day, and early on the morning of the 27th, she peacefully fell asleep."

Meekly bowing to the unerring will of God, the bereaved husband tried to remember that the parting was but for a season, and that it would be followed before very long by a similar summons addressed to himself; while sons and daughters looked up for grace to enable them to bear their first great grief with patience and resignation.

> "Since 'tis Thy sentence I should part
> With the most precious treasure of my heart,
> I freely that and more resign;
> My heart itself, as its delights, is Thine.
> My little all I give to Thee:
> Thou gav'st a greater gift, Thy Son, to me."

Letters of kindly sympathy poured in upon the shaded home; and from these expressions of esteem and friendship a few extracts are appended, chiefly with the view of giving an idea of the impression made upon visitors and acquaintances.

The Secretary of the Conference, the Rev. Joseph W. McKay, writes:—"I look back on an interval of thirty years as though it were yesterday, with the vivid recollection of the kind and hospitable attention received at the hands of Mrs. Shillington during the first year of my ministry, when I so often found in your house a home; and the opportunities for intercourse since that time have been occasions for renewed affection and respect. To those who realise the blessed 'dayspring from on high,' there is a light even amid the shadows of death. In the presence of the God of the covenant,—'the God of the living'—our friends who have fallen asleep in Jesus are living still, and they may surely, in a most comforting sense, live to us, as we are assured they 'live to Him.'"

The Rev. Dr. Cather, writing from New York, where tidings of Mrs. Shillington's death reached him most unexpectedly, bears the following true and beautiful testimony to her worth:—"I have learned with great sorrow your irreparable loss. . . . I have found it good to recall the beautiful walk of the dear departed saint since I was first privileged to know her. Never can I forget the scenes of domestic joy which your circle presented when I first sojourned in your home twenty-nine years ago. The father, the mother, the lovely children; the catholic sympathy, the liberal co-operation in all good work for Christ, His cause, and the world; the wide circle of relatives and neighbours, who all derived their best aspirations and loftier tone from yourself and family as their strong and steady centre. It is on these grounds that I

mingle, as I cannot forbear to do, my loving congratulations with my sorrowful sympathies, that the life of her whom God has taken was so true, so real, so good, so beautiful, so full of good fruits, so honouring to Christ, whom from her early youth she had loved and served."

From many of the ministers who took part in the Missionary Anniversaries very welcome and consoling communications were received. The following is from the Rev. Thomas M'Cullagh:—"I was much impressed with what I witnessed of Mrs. Shillington's gentleness, piety, and good sense, and I have spoken of her to my friends as a beautiful specimen of a godly matron, a thoroughly Christian lady. I am sure that one so good—good through the hallowing grace of God—will be greatly missed at Portadown, and especially in her own family."

The following letter is so touching and beautiful, that its insertion without abridgment needs no apology:—

"BELFAST, *Dec. 29th*, 1870.

"MY DEAR MR. SHILLINGTON,

"YOU and I are mourning; you for your wife, I for my firstborn—the one an inestimable partner, the other a pleasant child. But, thank God, we both mourn not as they who have no hope. Through a long life of grace and worth Mrs. Shillington has walked by your side, adorning your name and home, and blessing your family; impressing grateful recollections upon your friends, and doing good to the servants of God. Not taken from you early, not

early left to mourn for you, her days have been crowned with mercies, and her children will call her blessed. How many husbands are bereaved who have not the same past of uniform excellence to look upon, or the same future of clear hope to turn parting into the pledge of speedy reunion. God will comfort you with all His comforts, which alone avail in cases where the whole heart is so sore. Many will pray for you, and many a servant of God, whose words will never reach your ear, will tell his children and his friends of the virtues of your excellent and lamented wife.

"Our united Christian regards and sympathies to every member of your family.

"Yours with real respect,

"Affection, and condolence,

"WM. ARTHUR.

"T. A. SHILLINGTON, ESQ."

Miss Lutton, of Bristol, who was so intimately connected with, and was so useful to, Mrs. Shillington at an early period of her Christian course, still spared in useful as well as venerable age, sent the following poetic tribute, which is highly prized, both on account of its writer, and its subject:—

"When first I knew her she was in the prime
Of early womanhood. Before her lay
Two maps of travel throught the vale of Time
Into eternity; and she must say
Where her choice rested. One was bright and gay,
Full of companions on a broad, smooth road;
The other was a narrow, lonely way,
Gloomy its entrance, but its ending glowed.
She chose the narrow path, and henceforth walked with God.

"When last we parted she was at her post
Of quiet duties, with domestic cares;
The loving and the loved—distinguished most
For close resemblance to her Lord, who bears
His people's burdens, and their sorrows shares.
Her soul was sympathy; she lived to bless,
Yet little deemed she worth—her praises—prayers—
Her holiest service—but would still confess
Her only trust was Christ, His blood and righteousness.

"When next I see her—oh, the thought is bliss!
Dazzling will be her crown, her robe pure white;
Not in a land of shadows such as this,
But in the region of unsullied light,
Where God's own presence makes each object bright.
There I shall see her full of love divine,
Winging on errand high her rapid flight;
And, mingling with the hosts that sing and shine,
Swelling the loud acclaim—'All glory, Lord, be Thine.'"

We need not wonder that our friend and brother keenly felt this trial. Just as there are thoughts which in their vastness only great minds can grasp, so there are sorrows which, in their intensity, only great hearts can feel. Sympathy is too often denied to the gifted and the able, under the impression that they can without difficulty bear a heavier burden than their less favoured fellows. But there is another side to the question. Not unfrequently their grief increases in severity, and trial becomes more crushing, just in proportion as their affliction can be contemplated in all its bearings. And this is particularly likely to be the case where the most delicate and tender affection is combined with uncommon mental vigour. When we meet with such persons in their sorrows, we do well to be generous in our sympathy,

and to remember that our heavenly Father is often pleased to use the simplest means and the plainest truths to comfort the most distinguished of his servants.

Trial embraces a wide variety, and some forms of affliction appeal to us with peculiar force; but none touches a tenderer chord than that through which our dear friend was now called to pass. The removal of a beloved wife throws all other bereavements into the shade. Parents we expect to precede us to the land of spirits, and we think ourselves favoured if they are spared to see the allotted "three score years and ten;" children we part with reluctantly, but usually some are left to cheer our stricken hearts; but we mourn for a wife (when such a sad stroke falls on us) as for a part of ourselves, and settled sadness spreads over us its gloomy shadow. Mr. Shillington felt the death of his devoted partner all the more because the loss was so very great. His own estimate of her value was beautifully expressed when presiding at a public meeting in her native town a few years before her death. One of the speakers at the meeting, in alluding to the pleasure it gave him to see Mr. Shillington in the chair, took occasion to remind him of the debt he owed to Lurgan. At a subsequent stage of the proceedings, Mr. Shillington referred to this, saying, "I acknowledge my obligations. My debt to Lurgan has lengthened the summers, and brightened the winters of my life." His letters to his children abound in allusions to Mrs. Shillington, which display the fond affection and high esteem that he cherished towards her.

She was a person of almost matchless adaptation to the sphere in which she moved; between them a love subsisted as warm and fresh as when it first sprang up; she had been a loving and faithful wife during the long period of more than forty-one years; and her death, though not sudden, was unexpected. It is not strange that "the strong man bowed himself." Not that he was dissatisfied with the Divine dealings, or that he permitted himself to indulge a spirit of discontent, or to utter a word of murmur. Many a time, with brimful eyes and broken voice, did he say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" To a mind constituted as his was, there would have been a temptation to inquire unbelievingly of the Most High as to the *wherefore* of his affliction, if his religion had been more superficial; but, with his thoroughly defined views of God's character, and his long continued and deep experience of God's love, he was quite prepared to conclude with the devoted Payson that "God's will is the perfection of all reason," and to resolve with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Nevertheless, the effects of the stroke were manifest. His spirits became less elastic, and his well-knit frame lost much of its spring; while engagements, which had been to him but a pastime, became a toil.

XI.

SECLUSION AND DEATH.

CLOSE observers had perceived, even previously to his wife's removal, that infirmity in some form was creeping stealthily upon Mr. Shillington. He went to Dublin in June, 1870, to attend the preparatory committees connected with the Conference; but he lacked his usual animation, and was obliged to leave before they came to a conclusion. Not long afterwards he was suddenly taken ill in Belfast, whither he had gone on business. It was hoped that the attack was of small account, but it afterwards appeared plain that it was paralysis in a mild form. Towards the end of the season Mrs. Shillington and he spent some time in England, and the effect, so far as he was concerned, seem for a brief period to be beneficial. But then came the heavy stroke which took from him "the desire of his eyes," and which seemed to destroy the charm which he had seen in any other earthly object.

The following letter to his eldest grand-daughter was written during the period of absence from home just referred to, and breathes a lovely spirit of affection and cheerfulness.

"PROSPECT HOTEL, HARROGATE,
"*November 17th*, 1870.

"MY EVER DEAR ARABEL,

"I CAN hardly express to you how much pleased and delighted I was with your very nice, kind, and affectionate letter received yesterday, congratulating me upon having filled up my term of seventy years. I used to think that when people had lived to my age, they were often considered an incumbrance, and that they were rather in the way; but now I find it *is* something to retain the affection of not only children, but grandchildren, when we get into the sere and withered leaf of old age.

"Let others complain if they may of joys departed; I must—I dare not. I have still my children and my grandchildren, and it is a joy to feel they love me, and it is a joy to feel I love them dearly.

"Give my best and most affectionate love to your papa and mamma, and all the dear children, remembering expressly Gertrude and Marion.

"Your affectionate Grandpapa,
"THOS. A. SHILLINGTON."

For several months after Mrs. Shillington's decease he followed his usual course, except that he somewhat lessened his engagements. Business was pursued without much interruption, his Class was met when he felt himself equal to it, and meetings of various kinds were attended when at all possible. The Circuit Quarterly Meeting of June, 1871, will long remain in the recollection of all who were present at it. To give a just impression of it we are obliged to

go back a little. Owing chiefly to commercial reverses the financial affairs of the Portadown Circuit had got into an unsatisfactory condition, and on the writer's appointment to it in the year 1870 an accumulated debt was found to exist. It was then resolved to make an effort to extinguish it, and at the same time to discharge some minor liabilities, the entire sum being about £550. Mr. Shillington headed the list with a generous subscription, and a willing people came cheerfully to the rescue. At the meeting referred to a report was presented, from which it appeared that the effort to that date had realized about £490. This was more than our honoured friend had expected, and he was filled with joy ; and, with beaming face, and voice something like that of bygone times, he said, "Well, Ben," (addressing Mr. Benjamin Robb, his co-steward), "if you make it £500, I'll pay the balance." And thus the thing was done, and we were able as a Circuit to say, "Not in debt."

For many months Mr. Shillington had not appeared to be in as good health as in the early part of June, and it was, therefore, all the more startling when, on the morning of Sunday, the 11th of the same month, a report ran through the town that he was dangerously ill. Inquiry proved that this was too true. He had risen as usual, and had nearly completed his toilet when he was suddenly seized with paralysis, one side being rendered completely powerless. From that hour he was a confirmed invalid. For a time he was able to go out occasionally in a brougham or a Bath chair, then he was obliged to remain indoors, subsequently he could not leave his bed-chamber, and for

more than two years previous to his decease he was constantly confined to bed. It seemed as if he must "suffer awhile" that he might be made "perfect." He had through a long and active life glorified God by *doing* His will, with a fidelity and an energy alike uncommon, and now he is given an opportunity of *bearing* that will in protracted feebleness and suffering. Possibly a more trying ordeal could not have been chosen for him. Sharp pain, brief in duration, would likely have been more easily endured by a man whose life had been spent as his was, than tedious months of unvarying inaction. But, all is right; He who guides the course of events cannot err—

> "A Father's hand prepares the cup,
> And what He wills is best."

It has been said that there are three ways in which we may bear affliction—by indifference, which is the most common; by philosophy, which is the most ostentatious; and by religion, which is the most effectual. Surely the last is the most to be preferred. It not only inculcates patience, but also imparts the grace which renders it easy of cultivation. And patience commends itself to the intelligent mind as being truly reasonable. Bishop Jeremy Taylor observes, "Impatience doth but entangle us, like the fluttering of a bird in a net." We gain nothing by resisting the will of the Most High, but much by meekly submitting to it; and this religion, possessed in its spirituality and power, enables us to do. Such was the course adopted by our dear friend. He seemed to have no thought of any other, but at once yielded

himself up into the hand of God. It did not appear to need a struggle in his case to say, "Not my will, but Thine, be done!" To suffer came well nigh as readily to him as to work; and it soon became almost as hard for us to think of that quiet invalid as having been the moving spirit of the whole community, as it would have been before to think of him in any other way.

Trying as it was, his long period of seclusion had many alleviations. Chief amongst them was his own happy enjoyment of personal salvation. On this subject he was never doubtful or incoherent. As to other matters memory would sometimes fail, events or persons would be confounded; but his knowledge of Christ as his Saviour suffered no obscuration. To his family and friends this was almost as great a consolation as it was to himself, and enabled them to "glory in tribulations also." Then he was surrounded by affectionate and devoted children, some of whom were with him night and day. Tenderly nursed by his daughters, who anticipated his every wish, and receiving the unremitting attentions of his sons and son-in-law, Mr. Shillington now reaped in a very grateful form the result of his loving faithfulness as a Christian father. Such a picture of domestic union and self-sacrificing filial devotion was well calculated to illustrate the blessed influence of the Gospel upon the relations of life, and to exhibit its unspeakable value. Nor were the hours, except when at times a change in the form of the disease might cause anxiety, passed wearily. Reading occupied many of them, the Divine Word ever filling the foremost place, but

having often associated with it other works of interest and profit. And singing was very frequently resorted to. The admiration for the Wesleyan Hymn Book, which has been noticed as amounting to almost a passion with our departed friend, remained when enthusiasm as to many other things had died away, and hour after hour was beguiled by sweet and elevating strains in which it was very usual for the sufferer himself to join. Some of these were established favourites, and he never seemed to weary of them ; as, for example, those commencing—

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me ;"

and

"When I survey the wondrous cross."

Others, which he much delighted in, were—

"Jesu, lover of my soul,"

sung to the tune "Hotham" ;

"Jesu, Thy boundless love to me."

"And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood ?"

"Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain."

"Peace, doubting heart, my God's I am ; "

and,

"The God of Abraham praise."

Often he would express his experience in a couplet, saying—

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

or,

"This all my hope, and all my plea,
For me the Saviour died."

Sometimes he would finish a hymn when a part of it had been said or sung, if the sentiment struck him forcibly. Thus, on one occasion, a friend visiting him repeated the verse—

> "O what a blessed hope is ours!
> While here on earth we stay,
> We more than taste the heavenly powers,
> And antedate that day;"

when he immediately took up the lines which follow—

> "*We feel* the resurrection near,
> Our life in Christ conceal'd,
> And with His glorious presence here
> Our earthen vessels fill'd."

It was during Mr. Shillington's last illness that his younger son was married, and he very tenderly and affectionately received his new daughter, whose acquaintance he had made some years previously—welcoming her as the wife of his son, and delighting to unite with her, in her frequent visits to him, in singing the hymns which had such power to soothe him.

Thus pain and restlessness were relieved, and his mind was aided in thinking on the "things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." Letters of sympathy, too, were not wanting. From relatives at a distance, and from Christian friends they were received often, and sent a sunbeam into the sick room; and now and again from public bodies of various kinds messages equally thoughtful and sincere, if of necessity more formal, came to remind him of former and happy associations, and of continued and

affectionate remembrance. Amongst the latter may especially be mentioned, as being highly prized by him, the Resolution of the Conference of 1871, and that of the Portadown District Committee, passed at its meeting in the month of August in the same year.

But before very long the Great Refiner saw that it was enough—that the purpose of affliction had been answered, and He said to His faithful servant, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The language of his heart and tongue had been, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come;" and now the "days" were finished, and the "change" was at hand. The Christian's death has been likened to the deep repose of the summer-evening sky, as the sinking sun in calm majesty disappears from our view; and it is not difficult to apply the figure to the departure of our esteemed and lamented friend. Heaven was often felt to be very near to that sick bed—so near as to be only separated by a "veil;" and, as he passed within it, following his glorious Forerunner, hearts were comforted as they were stricken, and tears were dried almost as soon as shed.

"Very gradually," writes Miss Shillington, "were the cords of his tabernacle loosened. 'The earthly house of my tabernacle is being dissolved,' he said, when he was about twelve months ill. 'The Lord might be pleased to spare you for a long time yet,' said some one; adding, 'it is not impossible.' 'It is not impossible, but it is not desirable,' was his answer. By degrees restlessness gave place to languor and feebleness. Much conversation was avoided, that his strength might be spared. He had often said in his

health, 'Religion is not a thing to be merely talked about—it is something to be *lived*;' and now his patient, gentle spirit, bore testimony to the hidden life within. Yet there was not wanting the testimony of words. 'I trust you find the Saviour present and precious,' said a friend and faithful pastor. 'I thank God that He is,' was the quiet, but distinct, response.

"Very gently and sweetly he gave himself up to be cared for by others, and very gratefully he received their attentions; and the Lord dealt very gently and graciously with him, keeping his mind ever attuned to love and praise. The last day but one of his life on earth, he united in singing; and, when the voice that accompanied him failed, he calmly and cheerfully expressed his wish for the remainder of the hymn:

'This, this is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend;
Whose love is as great as His power,
And neither knows measure nor end.
'Tis Jesus!—the First and the Last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come.'"

And thus he continued until the spirit was released—sometimes sinking into heavy slumber, then waking up to utter some fond word of affection, or to express his confidence in the power of Christ to save; but each time becoming weaker as life ebbed away. But on no occasion was there a trace of fear; death was met with the quiet trust of one who had received death's Conqueror as his Saviour.

"No earthly clinging—
No lingering gaze;
No strife at parting—
No sore amaze;
But sweetly, gently he pass'd away,
From the world's dim twilight to endless day!"

In the stillness of death he lay a very model of venerable and manly beauty; and, as he gazed on "the beautiful clay," thoughts came crowding on the mind of him who now writes these pages. He thought of *the happiness of the emancipated spirit*—of the certainty of its safety through the merits of Jesus—of its capacity for enjoyment, exceeding, we may suppose, that of many other saved ones; in the same proportion as he had surpassed them in his grasp of truth; in the thoroughness of his enjoyment in the ways of God, and in the active consecration of his life to the promotion of the Divine glory; and of the durability of the bliss now entered upon. And then he thought of *reunion*, and of Baxter's idea that the expectation of meeting with and loving our friends in heaven should chiefly kindle our love to them while on earth; and, slightly altering one of those hymns which had so much to do in preparing the spirit of our friend for the skies, he thought we might (not inappropriately) sing—

"Thy soul hath o'ertaken its mate,
And caught her again in the sky;
Advanced to her happy estate,
And pleasure that never shall die."

And then he thought—"We have an interest in this reunion too. Our intercourse with our departed

brother is not broken off for ever. We shall meet again, and have sweet and profitable intercourse untrammelled by the disadvantages of earth."

> "Give joy or grief, give ease or pain,
> Take life or friends away:
> I come to find them all again
> In that eternal day."

Mr. Shillington died on Thursday, 2nd April, 1874; and on the following Monday the precious remains were conveyed to the family burying place at Drumcree, the funeral being attended by a large concourse of a truly representative character. It included persons of all ranks, and of every religious denomination. Upwards of thirty Wesleyan Ministers were present, and, at least, a similar number of Ministers connected with other sections of the Church; and with these were associated many of the gentry of the county, professional men, and leading merchants, some of whom had come from a considerable distance, Dublin and Belfast furnishing each several representatives. But more impressive still was the large attendance of the general population of the town and neighbourhood, including many of the poor, that had been sharers of a bounty both profuse and long sustained. Business appeared to be altogether suspended, and every countenance wore an aspect of mourning.

At the grave a brief address was delivered at the special request of the family by the writer of these pages. In Portadown, fitting allusion was subsequently made to the life and death of our valued and lamented

friend by the Rev. Edward Johnston, Superintendent Minister of the Circuit, the chapel being draped in black. And in Belfast two memorial sermons were preached;—one in University Road Church, by the Rev. William Crook, D.D.; and one in Donegal Square Church, in accordance with the request of the Belfast Ministers' Meeting, by the Rev. William P. Appelbe, LL.D., then Chairman of the District.

Testimonies to the worth of the deceased, conveyed chiefly in letters of condolence, were very numerous and comforting. Partaking, as these communications do, to a large extent of the character of private friendship, they are not inserted, more especially as it would be impossible to give all, and as selection would be a very difficult task. But to the kind-hearted and sympathising writers it will be a gratification to know that they abundantly answered their purpose, in soothing the sorrows of the bereaved family as they woke up to a full perception of the greatness of their loss.

In addition to tributes of this description, resolutions of regret and sympathy were passed by the Town Commissioners of Portadown, and the various public Boards and Committees of which Mr. Shillington had been a member, each testifying to his worth and lamenting his removal. The different departments of the Church of God, which he loved so well, also placed on record their sense of the loss sustained, and sought to comfort the sorrowing survivors. Touching tributes were received from the Quarterly Meeting of his own Circuit, from the District Meeting of which he had been so prominent a member for so long a time, from the Committee of the Belfast Methodist College, from the

Chapel Committee, and from the Conference itself; and, in delicate and grateful recognition of his services, Mr. Thomas Shillington, J.P., his eldest son, was appointed to the position vacated by his father as Treasurer of the Chapel Fund. The following is the communication received from the Committee of the Belfast Methodist College.

"To THOMAS SHILLINGTON, ESQ., J.P.

"PORTADOWN.

"DEAR SIR,

"AT the last meeting of the Methodist College Committee, reference was made to the death of your highly esteemed and beloved father.

"Though unwilling to intrude upon the sacredness of domestic and hallowed grief, yet we cannot forbear tendering to you and the bereaved family our deep and heartfelt sympathy in this season of sorrow and affliction. We fervently supplicate the Throne of the Heavenly Grace that you and they may be sustained and comforted in the time of need by the gracious presence and abundant consolations of God the Holy Ghost, the Divine Comforter.

"We mourn also on account of the great loss the Wesleyan Church has sustained by the removal of one of its most devoted sons.

"He was always ready to afford its deliberations the benefit of a singularly sound judgment, and to aid its institutions at home and abroad by generous contributions.

"He exemplified by a life of blameless integrity, of consistent piety, and of exemplary fidelity in every

relation of life and office in the Church, the loveliness of Christianity and the efficiency of Methodist discipline and doctrine.

"He was truly a pillar in the Church below, beautiful in character, and useful in supporting its interests. Having overcome, we are confident that he is now a pillar in the Church above, to go out no more for ever.

"We would most gratefully record the services he rendered this institution, commencing with the time its erection was projected, and the deep interest he invariably manifested in its prosperity. We cannot pass over in silence the salutary influence he exerted on education generally in Ireland, in the honourable position to which he was so worthily raised as a member of the Senate of the Queen's University.

"Happy the children, in the hallowed sanctuary of whose hearts the image and character of such a father are enshrined in deep and grateful affection. May the God of your Father be the God of his children for ever and ever!

"Signed on behalf of the Committee,

"ROBINSON SCOTT, D.D., *Chairman.*

"ROBERT G. JONES,
PHILIP JOHNSTON, } *Secretaries.*"

15th April, 1874.

Within a few months of his death, his fellow townsmen placed upon record their estimate of his worth by erecting a handsome marble tablet in the Methodist Chapel, Thomas Street, bearing the following inscription:—

AS A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT TO THE
MEMORY OF
THOMAS AVERELL SHILLINGTON, J.P.,
WHO ENTERED INTO REST APRIL 2, 1874,
IN THE SEVENTY-FOURTH YEAR OF HIS AGE.
THIS TABLET HAS BEEN ERECTED
BY HIS FELLOW TOWNSMEN,
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE
OF HIS PUBLIC SPIRIT AND PRIVATE VIRTUES,
AND OF THE MANY VALUABLE SERVICES
RENDERED BY HIM
IN PROMOTING THE PROGRESS OF PORTADOWN
AND THE TRUE WELFARE OF ITS INHABITANTS.

"A JUST MAN AND UPRIGHT
IN HIS GENERATION."

Thus we have afforded to us in the case of our departed friend, a notable illustration of the important Scripture principle, "Them that honour Me, I will honour." His aim to please God in everything was universally acknowledged, and the wisest and the best united to pay respect to his memory.

In the foregoing pages, we have sought to state, in the simplest terms, the leading facts and incidents connected with the life of one whose name will long be dear to many, leaving them for the most part to teach their own lessons. We mourn the unworthiness of our attempt, and yet dare to hope that it shall not

be altogether in vain. Our effort has been to pourtray, truly and lovingly, a noble Christian man, who "served his generation by the will of God;" not on the one hand to flatter the dead or mislead the living, nor on the other to detect or exaggerate blemishes, for the morbid pleasure of exposing them. if our conception be correct, and if it has been conveyed with any degree of accuracy and force, the impression made upon the minds of any who thoughtfully read these pages, will be, that the subject of this memorial was remarkable for *completeness of character*. Others have been, and are distinguished for excellent and eminent qualities, perhaps in some instances, to a greater extent than he was; but in no point was he weak; in no respect was he seriously defective. He was a man who could not have led an obscure life; he was a prominent figure in any group of which he formed a part; and was made much more influential and commanding by the possession of a well defined religious experience, and the adoption of a wisely chosen religious course. He was in no danger of incurring the doom pronounced by one who said—

"'Tis infamy to die and not be missed."

Missed in the family circle, missed in the house of prayer, missed in the councils of God's Church, missed in the resorts of business men, missed in the community at large; he has left a blank apparent to all who knew his worth.

But what is the purpose contemplated by bio-

graphy? Is it merely to paint a portrait, and hang it in view for casual observation? Is it merely to occupy a passing hour agreeably? Nay, nay. It has a nobler end to accomplish. It is intended by it to stimulate and help to good and holy deeds by tracing the course of those who proved themselves to be worthy of imitation, and thus to try to fill the blanks made by their removal. The name inscribed upon the title page of this volume is still worthily borne. Sons and daughters are treading in their father's steps. But there is room, and there is need, for others. Business life never more than now needed men in the marts of commerce to maintain a high standard of industry and integrity, and to show that religious principle can be interwoven with the pursuits of life, and a consistent Christian character associated with every lawful calling. Church life never more than now required in its men of mark, and especially in its leading laymen, the combination of genuine spirituality with intelligent and practical piety. And we are much mistaken if the example of THOMAS AVERELL SHILLINGTON is not well calculated to promote these desirable objects. May such a blessing attend the perusal of these pages as will render them effective in the accomplishment of these ends!

PRESENTATION VOLUMES.

Christian Work for Gentle Hands: Thoughts on

Female Agency in the Church of God. By the Rev. JOHN DWYER. Third Edition. 18mo. Price 1s. 6d.

"This is an admirable book . . . and will be read with great interest by our female friends. . . . We warmly commend it to our readers as an appropriate and beautiful New-Year's Gift."—*Irish Evangelist.*

Aids to Daily Meditation: being Practical Re-

flections and Observations on a Passage of Scripture for Each Day in the Year. Crown 8vo. Price 3s. 6d.

"It is calculated to be highly useful. . . . We can cordially recommend it. . . . Altogether it supplies a desideratum, is well got up, and is cheap withal."—*The Methodist Quarterly.*

The Dream of Pythagoras, and other Poems.

By EMMA TATHAM. Fifth Edition, with Additional Pieces; and Memoir by the Rev. B. GREGORY, Author of the "Thorough Business Man," &c. Crown 8vo. With Portrait. Price 3s. 6d. French Morocco, extra gilt and gilt edges. Price 7s. 6d.

"This is not an ordinary volume of verse. There are noble thoughts in it, often expressed with exquisite felicity of language. We rank this volume very highly; we think that both the principles and the poetry of it deserves the approbation which it will, we are persuaded, receive."—*Church of England Magazine.*

A Year with the Wild Flowers. A Popular

Introduction to the Study of English Botany. By EDITH WADDY. Royal 16mo. Elegantly bound, gilt edges, and profusely Illustrated. Price 3s. 6d.

"This is a useful little volume, combining interesting information with simple progressive teaching. . . . It gives an account of some of the common wild flowers of each month. . . . The illustrations are most accurately sketched, and materially add to the value of the work, which we feel great pleasure in highly commending."—*The Literary World.*

Climbing: A Manual for the Young who desire

to rise in Both Worlds. Crown 8vo., cloth extra. Fourth Edition. Revised and Enlarged. Price 2s. 6d.

"Mr. Smith's 'Climbing' has, we observe, reached a Fourth Edition, and the public verdict needs no confirmation from us. Bound in the most tasteful style of these tasteful times, it is well adapted to strike and please the class for whom it is designed."—*Watchman.*

Sunshine in the Kitchen: or, Chapters for Maid

Servants. By the Rev. BENJAMIN SMITH, Author of "Climbing," "Vice-Royalty," "Power of the Tongue," &c. Crown 8vo. Numerous Illustrations. Price 3s. 6d.

"Perhaps the chief difficulty about a book for servants is to get servants to read it, but this difficulty will almost certainly be got over in the case of this volume. Most servants will read it with avidity, and many besides them into whose hands it may fall. It is a handsomely got up book. . . . Masters and mistresses will do well to make their servants a present of it. . . . It would be a good deed that would be likely to bring its reward."—*Literary World.*

LONDON: WESLEYAN CONFERENCE OFFICE.

PUBLICATIONS

OF THE

WESLEYAN CONFERENCE OFFICE.

NEW BOOKS AND NEW EDITIONS.

"Out of Darkness into Light;" or, The Hidden Life made Manifest through Facts of Observation and Experience: Facts Elucidated by the Word of God. By ASA MAHAN, D.D., Author of *The Baptism of the Holy Spirit*, *Christian Perfection*, etc. Crown 8vo., Price 5s.

The Prophet of Sorrow; or, The Life and Times of Jeremiah. By the Rev. THORNLEY SMITH. With a Frontispiece from the Fresco of Jeremiah by MICHAEL ANGELO. Crown 8vo. Price 4s. 6d.

The Mother of Jesus not the Papal Mary. By the Rev. E. J. ROBINSON. Crown 8vo.

The Life of James Dixon, D.D., Wesleyan Minister. Written by his Son, RICHARD WATSON DIXON, M.A., Minor Canon in Carlisle Cathedral Church. With three Portraits, and a Vignette of his Birthplace. Crown 8vo. Price 7s. 6d.

Memorials of the Life and Labours of the Rev. William Shaw, late General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions in South-East Africa. By HIS OLDEST SURVIVING FRIEND. With New Portrait, Six Illustrations, and a Map. Crown 8vo. Price 6s. 6d.

Missionary Anecdotes, Sketches, Facts, and Incidents, relating to the State of the Heathen and the Effects of the Gospel in various parts of the World. By the Rev. WILLIAM MOISTER. Crown 8vo. Price 4s.

Recollections of My Own Life and Times. By Thomas Jackson. Edited by the Rev. B. FRANKLAND, B.A, With an Introduction and Postscript by G. OSBORN, D.D. With a Portrait. Crown 8vo. Cheap Edition. Price 5s.

Daniel Quorm and his Religious Notions. By the Rev. Mark GUY PEARSE. Crown 8vo. Numerous Illustrations. Cloth extra. Gilt edges. Price 2s. 6d.

The History of Methodism in Macclesfield, Cheshire. By the Rev. BENJAMIN SMITH. Crown 8vo. Price 6s.

Entire Sanctification: its Nature, the Way of its Attainment, and Motives for its Pursuit. In Letters to a Friend. By the late Rev. JOHN HUNT, Wesleyan Minister, Fiji. With Preface, by the Rev. JAMES CALVERT. Crown 8vo. Price 3s.

Dialogues on Sanctification: for the Use of those who are Seeking Full Salvation. By the Rev. J. S. PIPE. 18mo. Price 1s.

Entire Sanctification Attainable in this Life: Being John WESLEY'S "Plain Account of Christian Perfection;" and JOHN FLETCHER'S "Practical Application of the Doctrine to various Classes of Christians." Royal 32mo. Price 1s.; gilt edges 1s. 4d.

Class-Meetings in Relation to the Design and Success of Methodism. By the Rev. S. W. CHRISTOPHERS. Crown 8vo. Price 3s.

Society Meetings in Wesleyan Methodism. By the Rev. JOSEPH PORTREY. Foolscap 8vo. Price 2s.

Scenes from the Life of Nehemiah; or, Chapters for Christian Workers. Foolscap 8vo. Price 1s.

Sunbeams in Sorrow: Recollections and Remains of Helena Loveday Cocks. By her Father, the Rev. SAMPSON COCKS. Second Edition. Crown 8vo. Price 2s. 6d.

Ecclesiastical Principles and Polity of the Wesleyan Methodists. The whole compiled by WILLIAM PEIRCE, and revised by FREDERICK J. JOBSON, D.D. Third Edition. Royal 8vo., cloth, 15s.; half morocco, cloth sides, 20s.

This work contains a correct Transcript of all the published Laws and Regulations of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion, from its first organisation to the present time, and affords full and authentic information on the History, Discipline, and Economy of Methodism.

COMMENTARIES, DICTIONARIES, &c.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Aids to Daily Meditation; being Practical Reflections and Observations on a Passage of Scripture for each Day in the Year. Crown 8vo., cloth, red edges. Price 3s. 6d.

The Holy Bible, with Notes, Critical, Explanatory, and Practical. By the Rev. JOSEPH BENSON. With Maps and a Portrait of the Author. Six Volumes, Imperial 8vo., cloth, red edges. Price £3 3s.

A Biblical and Theological Dictionary; Illustratixe of the Old and New Testament. By the Rev. JOHN FARRAR. With a Map of Palestine, and numerous Engravings. Crown 8vo. Price 3s. 6d.

An Ecclesiastical Dictionary: Explanatory of the History, Antiquities, Heresies, Sects, and Religious Denominations of the Christian Church. By the Rev. JOHN FARRAR. Crown 8vo. Price 5s.

The Proper Names of the Bible; their Orthography, Pronuncia-tion and Signification. With a Brief Account of the Principal Persons, and a Description of the Principal Places. By the Rev. JOHN FARRAR. 18mo. Price 1s. 6d.

A Commentary on the Old and New Testament; containing copious Notes, Theological, Historical, and Critical; with Improvements and Reflections. By the Rev. JOSEPH SUTCLIFFE, M.A. Imperial 8vo., cloth, marbled edges. Prices 12s. 6d.

A Biblical and Theological Dictionary, Explanatory of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Jews, and Neighbouring Nations, with an Account of the most Remarkable Places mentioned in Sacred Scripture; an Exposition of the Principal Doctrines of Christianity; and Notices of Jewish and Christian Sects and Heresies. By the Rev. RICHARD WATSON. Royal 8vo., cloth, red edges. Price 12s. 6d.

An Exposition of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, and of some other detached parts of Scripture. By the Rev. RICHARD WATSON. Demy 8vo. Price 6s. 12mo. Price 3s. 6d.

The New Testament, with Explanatory Notes. By the Rev. JOHN WESLEY. With the Author's last Corrections.
Pocket Edition. 18mo. Price 2s.
Large Type Edition. 8vo. Price 4s.
Library Edition, fine paper. Demy 8vo. Price 6s.

An Exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. By the Rev. HENRY W. WILLIAMS. Crown 8vo. Price 6s.

An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews. By the Rev. HENRY W. WILLIAMS. Crown 8vo. Price 6s.

The Incarnate Son of God; or, The History of the Life and Ministry of the Redeemer; arranged, generally, according to Greswell's Harmony of the Gospels. By the Rev. HENRY W. WILLIAMS. Crown 8vo. Price 4s.

Scripture Compared with Scripture. A Plan for Daily Bible Reading throughout the Year. Arranged by E. G. C. Price 6d.; limp cloth, gilt edges, 8d.

THEOLOGY.

Dunn (L. R.) The Mission of the Spirit; or, The Office and Work of the Comforter in Human Redemption. By the Rev. LEWIS R. DUNN, Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, U.S. Edited by the Rev. JOSEPH BUSH. Crown 8vo. Price 2s.

Edmondson (J.) Sermons on Important Subjects; with an Introduction by the Rev. T. JACKSON. Two Volumes. Crown 8vo. Price 6s.

Fletcher (J.) An Appeal to Matter of Fact and Common Sense; or, A Rational Demonstration of Man's Corrupt and Lost Estate. By the Rev. JOHN FLETCHER. 12mo. Price 2s.

Fletcher (J.) Five Checks to Antinomianism. By the Rev. JOHN FLETCHER. 12mo. Price 4s. 6d.

Fletcher (J.) The Works of the Rev. John Fletcher, with his Life, by the Rev. JOSEPH BENSON. Complete in Nine Volumes. 12mo. Price £1 11s. 6d.

Gregory (B.) The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of of Saints: Being the FERNLEY LECTURE for 1873. With Notes and Essays on the History of Christian Fellowship, and on the Origin of "High Church" and "Broad Church" Theories. By the Rev. BENJAMIN GREGORY. Demy 8vo., 290 pages, paper covers. Price 3s. 6d.; cloth, gilt lettered. 4s. 6d.

Hannah (J.) Introductory Lectures on the Study of Christian Theology, with Outlines of Lectures on the Doctrines of Christianity. By the late Rev. JOHN HANNAH, D.D.; to which is prefixed a Memoir of Dr. Hannah, by the Rev. W. B. POPE. Crown 8vo. Price 3s. 6d.

Jackson (T.) The Duties of Christianity, Theoretically and Practically Considered. By the Rev. THOMAS JACKSON. Second Edition. Crown 8vo. Price 4s.

Jackson (T.) The Institutions of Christianity, Exhibited in their Scriptural Character and Practical Bearing. By the Rev. THOMAS JACKSON. Crown 8vo. Price 5s.

Jackson (T.) The Providence of God, Viewed in the Light of Holy Scripture. By the REV. THOMAS JACKSON. New Edition, with Improvements. Crown 8vo. Price 4s.

Jackson (T.) The Christian Armed against Infidelity. A Collection of Treatises in Defence of Divine Revelation. Foolscap 8vo. Price 2s.

McAfee (D.) The Pillar and Ground of the Truth. Twelve Sermons on the Fundamental Truths of Christianity. By the Rev. DANIEL MCAFEE. With a Preface, by the Rev. WILLIAM ARTHUR, M.A. Crown 8vo. With Portrait. Price 6s.

Pope (W. B.) The Kingdom and Reign of Christ. Twenty- one Discourses delivered in the Chapel of the Wesleyan Theological Institution, Didsbury. By the Rev. WILLIAM B. POPE, Theological Tutor. Foolscap 8vo. Price 5s.

Pope (W. B.) The Person of Christ: Dogmatic, Scriptural, His- torical. The Fernley Lecture of 1871. With two additional Essays on the Biblical and Ecclesiastical Development of the Doctrine, and Illustrative. By the Rev. W. B. POPE, Theological Tutor, Didsbury College. 8vo. Price 7s.

Randles (M.) For Ever! An Essay on Eternal Punishment. By the Rev. MARSHALL RANDLES. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged. Crown 8vo. Price 4s.

Robinson (E. J.) How to Pray and What to Pray For. An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer and Christ's Introductory Sayings. By the Rev. EDWARD JEWITT ROBINSON. Crown 8vo. Price 5s.

Prest (C.) The Witness of the Holy Spirit. By the Rev. CHARLES PREST. Third Edition. Crown 8vo., cloth, red edges. Price 3s.

Thomas (J. W.) The Lord's Day; or, the Christian Sabbath: its History, Obligation, Importance, and Blessedness. By the Rev. JOHN WESLEY THOMAS. Crown 8vo. Price 3s. 6d.

Treffry (R.) Inquiry into the Doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ. By the Rev. RICHARD TREFFRY, Jun. Crown 8vo. Price 6s.

Treffry (R.) The Atonement Viewed in Relation to Scripture and Reason. In a Series of Letters to a Friend. By the Rev. RICHARD TREFFRY, Jun. 18mo. Price 2s.

Watson (R.) Sermons and Sketches of Sermons. By the Rev. RICHARD WATSON.

Three Volumes, demy 8vo. Price 18s.
Three Volumes, post 8vo. Price 10s. 6d.

Watson (R.) Theological Institutes; or, a View of the Evidences, Doctrines, Morals, and Institutions of Christianity. By the Rev. RICHARD WATSON.

Three Volumes, demy 8vo. Price 18s.
Four Volumes, royal 18mo. Price 14s.

Watson (R.) The Works of the Rev. Richard Watson. With his Memoirs by the Rev. THOMAS JACKSON.

Thirteen Volumes, demy 8vo. Price £3 18s.
Thirteen Volumes, post 8vo. Price £2 5s. 6d.

Wesley (J.) Sermons on Several Occasions. By the Rev. John WESLEY, M.A. With a Life of the Author by the Rev. JOHN BEECHAM, D.D.

Three Volumes, crown 8vo. Price 7s. 6d.
Fine Edition, three Volumes, post 8vo. Price 10s. 6d.
Library Edition, three Volumes, demy 8vo. Price 18s.

Wesley (J.) The Prose Works of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A. Edited by the Rev. THOMAS JACKSON. This Edition contains all the Latest Corrections of the Author; and includes the Life of Mr. Wesley by the Rev. JOHN BEECHAM, D.D.

Library Edition, fourteen Volumes, demy 8vo. Price £4 4s.
Cheap Edition, fourteen Volumes, post 8vo. Price £2 2s.

Wiseman (L. H.) Christ in the Wilderness; or, Practical Views of our Lord's Temptation. By the Rev. LUKE H. WISEMAN, M.A. Crown 8vo. Price 3s. 6d.